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# Hong Kong 1997

## A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

*Kwok Nai Wang*

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Christian Conference of Asia  
Urban Rural Mission

加港文獻館

Canada-Hong Kong Resource Centre

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## *Foreword*

1997 will be a significant watershed in the history of Hong Kong for the people living in it. It will be a time when the concept of "**One Country, Two Systems**" will be introduced for the administration of Hong Kong by China. No one really understands this concept which was agreed to by China and Britain. Its vagueness has caused much uncertainty in the minds of Hong Kong people about their country's future and consequently their own future too. This sense of insecurity has resulted in many people leaving the colony to look for greener pastures overseas. Many are still hoping to emigrate before 1997. Thus, political and economic security is a crucial issue related to 1997.

Visitors passing through Hong Kong will invariably ask one question after another concerning the future of Hong Kong and her people's response. There are only a few people who are really able to deal with the issue of 1997 in a critical and comprehensive way. We feel that it is important to provide a general background information for those who are interested and concerned about Hong Kong come 1997.

I am personally very happy to be able to produce this booklet in which Rev. Kwok Nai Wang has succeeded in providing a succinct account of the Hong Kong situation prior to June 4th, 1989 leading up to 1997.

Rev. Kwok is a prominent ecumenical leader who frequently speaks out on local community concerns, as well as regional and

global issues. Besides being a keen observer of contemporary politics, As a pastor and scholar, Rev. Kwok is adept at articulating the sentiments of the Hong Kong people concerning the future of Hong Kong. He has made critical presentations on this subject on many occasions to a variety of audiences. His views, however, are spoken out of concern and affection for the people of Hong Kong.

A person of Rev. Kwok Nai Wang's calibre of intellect and courage to speak out on the issues facing Hong Kong in 1997 will definitely gain the respect of not only the local community of Hong Kong but also of the international community.

This booklet is a collection of speeches, articles and letters prepared by the author for different audiences on different occasions between 1984 and 1991. You may find an overlapping of certain issues in the different articles. This is the case only because some issues are important enough to require emphasizing. I hope this booklet will give its readers a clearer understanding of the issues faced by the people of Hong Kong with the approach of 1997 and how they are addressing their circumstance.

I wish to express my appreciation to Rev. Kwok Nai Wang for his fine contribution in promoting social awareness through **Hong Kong 1997: A Christian Perspective**. We are thankful for the opportunity to publish this booklet for wider circulation.

**Ahn Jae-Woong**

December 1991

Hong Kong

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## **Notes**

1. The Hong Kong Experiment: "One Country , Two Systems"

*(Presented at the CCA Workshop on the Church's Participation in Political Reforms in Asia in Bangkok on October 27, 1988 and after slight revision at the National Council of Churches of Christ, U.S.A. in New York on May 22, 1989.)*

2. The Future of Hong Kong

*(Presented at the World Council of Churches in Geneva on October 23, 1989.)*

3. Hong Kong: "Two Countries, One Victim"

*(Written for der Überblick on February 26, 1990.)*

4. Human Rights in Hong Kong

*(Written for the Church of Sweden 1989 Annual Report on March 6, 1990.)*

5. The Post June 4 Wrangles Between China and Hong Kong

*(A speech given at the Asian-North American Women Theologians meeting in Hong Kong in May 31, 1990.)*

6. Hong Kong: Realities and Prospects

*(Presented at the Basel Mission Delegation in Hong Kong on October 8, 1990.)*

7. The Other Side of Hong Kong

*(Presented at the Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland in London on June 10, 1991.)*

8. Whither the Hong Kong Experiment

*(Presented at the Church Development Fund Board Meeting in Stuttgart on June 18, 1991.)*

9. Democracy in Hong Kong

*(Presented at the United Board for Christians Higher Education in Asia Meeting in Hong Kong on October 5, 1991.)*

10. Hong Kong Faces 1997: Recolonization or Decolonization

*(Presented at the CCA-WSCF joint program on "Youth and Students, Walk the Path of Obedience" on December 2, 1991 and at the CCA-LA consultation on "Religious Movements and the State in the New World Order" on December 4, 1991, both held in Hong Kong.)*

11. The Protestant Churches in Hong Kong: A Situation Report

*(A speech given at a Jesuit Workshop in Hong Kong on October 2, 1984.)*

12. The Church in Hong Kong, Before and After 1991

*(A speech given at the Asian Trustees' Meeting of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia on October 5, 1991.)*

# 1

## ***The Hong Kong Experiment: "One Country, Two Systems"***

### **The Context: The Sino-British Joint Declaration**

For long centuries, Hong Kong was a part of China. But as a result of the infamous Opium Wars, the island of Hong Kong was ceded to Britain in 1842, and the southern part of the Kowloon Peninsula, together with Stonecutters Island, in 1860. Subsequently, New Kowloon (North of Boundary Street), the New Territories, and about 250 outlying islands, which form 92% of the land area of the existing colony, were leased to Britain in 1898 for 99 years. Over the past century, few challenged the legitimacy of these so-called unequal treaty arrangements.

In 1972, when the People's Republic of China was admitted to the United Nations, China indicated she would not recognize the legality of the British Crown colony of Hong Kong. In 1979, Deng Xiaoping reportedly told Sir Murray Maclehoose, the then governor of Hong Kong, that China would take back Hong Kong no later than 1997. In September 1982, when Mr. Margaret Thatcher, the British Prime Minister, visited Beijing, she was told that China would resume its sovereignty over Hong Kong on July 1, 1997. Soon after, the British and the Chinese governments entered into negotiations which lasted for two solid years. The end product was an agreement in the form of a Joint Declaration, outlining the basic policies regarding the way the Chinese govern-

ment will exercise sovereignty over Hong Kong after July 1, 1997. Here are the most essential aspects:

- i) Hong Kong is to become a Special Administrative Region of China;
- ii) China, using the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, will allow Hong Kong to enjoy a high degree of autonomy, except in the matters of defense and foreign affairs;
- iii) The socialist system shall not be practiced in Hong Kong and the existing capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for fifty years;
- iv) The Chief Executive shall be selected from amongst Hong Kong citizens by election or through consultations and shall be accountable to the legislature;
- v) The legislature shall be constituted by elections (again, only Hong Kong Citizens will be elected, thus fulfilling the "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong" Principle); and,
- vi) The existing judicial system in Hong Kong shall remain unchanged, with the power of final adjudication added to it.

### **The Problem: A Crisis of Confidence**

Immediately after the initialing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration in September 1984, the Hong Kong government set up an assessment office to monitor citizens' acceptance of it. It was revealed that 81% of the citizens in Hong Kong thought the Joint Declaration was acceptable. Many even went so far as to think that it was a good agreement. On the whole, people at that time believed that after 1997, all the ingredients which make Hong Kong successful would be kept and Hong Kong citizens would enjoy self-government. But this rosy picture changed rapidly and dramatically. According to one opinion poll in July 1987, only

28% of local citizens thought that they could accept the Joint Declaration. One month later, according to another opinion poll, only 21% thought so.

Hong Kong citizens are definitely suffering from a confidence crisis. Recent immigration figures underscore this fact. Hong Kong citizens, particularly those with considerable resources (in terms of skills and money), are leaving in thousands. According to the figures released by the Immigration Department: in 1987, 29,998 Hong Kong citizens emigrated (mostly to North America and Australia); in 1988, the figure was 45,817. It is not far-fetched to put the 1989 estimate at 50,000!

What has caused this crisis of confidence in Hong Kong?

The major factor has to do with China. In 1984, China showed signs of liberalizing. What went on in China generated some faith amongst Hong Kong citizens towards China. During that period, China also made many promises to the people of Hong Kong. But soon, China changed. The downfall of Hu Yao Bang in January 1987 sent shivers down the spines of Hong Kong people. It was a sign that conservative elements were once more taking hold of China. People began to doubt whether all the promises could ever be fulfilled. Worse still, what gone on recently in China has strongly reminded the people in Hong Kong about China's poor record regarding respect for human rights. After all, about half of the people in Hong Kong originally came from China. Many have had first hand knowledge or even dreadful personal experiences during the various political movements in China since the 1950s, especially the notorious cultural revolution.

In addition, China on the whole has failed to read the Hong Kong situation. The Chinese leadership is too eager to listen to the opinions of the big businessmen. The wealthy represent only a very small segment of the community in Hong Kong. They may not know the so-called realities in Hong Kong. Furthermore, they are too eager to say things to please the Chinese leaders. So the picture formed in the minds of the Chinese leaders is that in order

to maintain stability and prosperity, their foremost consideration is to put the investors hearts at rest!

Citizens in Hong Kong, by and large, are very afraid of intervention by China. In November 1985, Xu Jiatusun, head of the New China News Agency in Hong Kong, gave a press conference during which he accused Britain of trying to introduce political reforms in Hong Kong. Since then many top-ranking Chinese officials have given the same kind of warning. It was to nobody's surprise that there were no direct elections to the legislature in Hong Kong in 1988 on account of China's adamant objections. The view of China has become crystal clear in the drafting of the Basic Law. The drafters, consisting of 33 mainlanders and 23 Hong Kong Chinese, all appointed by China, have drawn up proposals for the future S.A.R. government. On the whole, these proposals were so conservative that if passed, Hong Kong people will never have a fully elected legislature and will never be able to elect their own Chief Executive.

Hong Kong citizens' confidence plummeted further when China went ahead with the construction of a nuclear power plant at Daya Bay, just 40 kilometers to the northeast of Kowloon, despite more than 1.1 million people expressing their objection through a two-week signature campaign in August 1987.

## **The Demands**

### **1. Democracy Before 1997**

If the Hong Kong Experiment is going to work, full democracy must be established in Hong Kong on or before 1997.

Hong Kong is a British Crown colony. The British government sends a senior official to govern Hong Kong. The governor of Hong Kong has immense power. He handpicks his chief advisors to form the Executive Council which deals with all important policy matters. The majority of members of the law-making body, the Legislative Council, are also appointed. A minority of seats in

this chamber have been indirectly elected since 1985. Though not elected by citizens, the Hong Kong government often claims that it regularly consults citizens. But for those who know Hong Kong well, we know that the consultation processes are often mere "window-dressing". The government cannot accommodate views which are contrary to its own. Oftentimes, it listens to the views of the big businessmen and the successful professionals. So "rule by the elite" is the order of the day in Hong Kong. Ordinary citizens have no role at all to play in their own government.

It has often been said also that even though there is no democracy in Hong Kong, its citizens enjoy an impartial rule of law and a broad scope of individual freedom (at least by Asian standards). The Hong Kong government is accountable to the British government which is one of the oldest democracies in the world.

But in 1997, this picture will be changed radically. China will take the place of Britain as the sovereign state. According to the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration and the subsequent promises made by the most senior Chinese leaders, the future government will be sent neither from Britain nor from China. It will be rooted in Hong Kong. Hence, democracy in Hong Kong is the most obvious solution.

What should democracy look like in Hong Kong?

First, all efforts must be made to foster an open and free atmosphere in Hong Kong whereby all citizens can express themselves freely and enjoy life.

Second, all citizens in Hong Kong must have the right to elect their Chief Executive and all the legislators. The Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary should have a "balance of power". A fully democratic government in Hong Kong will greatly enhance the confidence of the people in Hong Kong because it can give more adequate protection of human rights and it will be more likely to respond to the needs and wishes of the citizens. Further-



more, only a government for the citizens and by the citizens can generate a keener sense of identity and belonging amongst citizens on which, in the long run, the development of Hong Kong largely depends.

All signs show that so far, China is very reluctant to give Hong Kong a democratic government, at least not before 2012. (This is stipulated in the draft Basic Law.) By and large, China has taken a pretty lenient attitude towards Hong Kong's social and economic affairs; but it is most stringent on the future political structure in Hong Kong. Presumably, China wants to maintain "stability and prosperity" in Hong Kong at all costs; hence, the less change the better. China believes that to have a democratic government introduced to Hong Kong at this time will be too radical a change. Things may easily get out of China's hands. Ultimately, China wants to maintain the final control over Hong Kong.

What China fails to grasp is that 98% of the people in Hong Kong are Chinese. A great majority are very happy to see Hong Kong being returned to China in 1997. (At least 80% of people in 1984 thought so according to the Hong Kong government assessment report in October that year.) Some citizens in Hong Kong may have misgivings about communism and the Chinese government. But citizens in Hong Kong can never pose any serious threat to the overthrow of the Chinese government. If they criticize, it is because they love China and wish to contribute to China's ambitious economic reforms and modernization programmes. The "One Country" do not pose any problem for Hong Kong Chinese. However, what they are insistent upon is the "Two Systems". Hong Kong citizens feel that in order to continue the so-called economic miracle in Hong Kong, China should not interfere unnecessarily. The "Two Systems" concept, if fully implemented, will allow Hong Kong to be insulated from China. This is a principal reason why Hong Kong should have a fully democratic government introduced as early as possible.

China should understand the psychology of the Hong Kong citizens. Moreover, the success of the Hong Kong Experiment will



benefit China immensely. Therefore, China must adopt a "let go, let live" attitude and a much more liberal policy towards Hong Kong.

## 2. A Fire Exit

Generally, citizens in Hong Kong are afraid to face the future because if something should go wrong after 1997, they have nowhere else to go, no escape route, so to speak. I believe that Britain has a responsibility towards the 3.25 million Hong Kong citizens who were born in its territory. Therefore, Britain should reconsider how to grant these "British subjects" British passports.

Since the early 1960s, Britain has denied Hong Kong citizens the right of abode in the United Kingdom. In 1981, Britain has passed the Nationality Act, arbitrarily giving Hong Kong citizens born in Hong Kong a new status - British Dependent Territory Citizen. Since then, Hong Kong citizens were not only deprived of the right of abode in the United Kingdom, but were also not allowed to enter the United Kingdom as they wish. In 1986, Britain passed the Hong Kong (British Nationality) Order which created the status of British National (Overseas) for Hong Kong British nationals who wish to retain British nationality after 1997. All these actions were very unusual. Step by step, the 3.25 million British nationals in Hong Kong have been deprived of a genuine nationality. They are neither British nor Chinese. This is not in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 (Article 15: "Everyone has the right to a nationality. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.") What is even more sad is that all this was done without any prior consultation. Most Hong Kong citizens have not even heard about this and all its implications.

They were hurt because they felt they were abandoned, especially when they compare themselves with their counterparts in Macau who will all be issued with E.E.C. passports by Portugal. Thus, Macanese Portuguese nationals will have the right of abode

in any E.E.C. country, even the United Kingdom, after Macau is returned to China in 1999.

It should be emphasized here that very few Hong Kong citizens would want to emigrate to the United Kingdom. But if they are given a "fire exit", I am sure many will decide to stay and work in Hong Kong. This would help to ease the "brain drain".

Britain added fuel to the confidence crisis in Hong Kong in other ways. It did not prevent two of the biggest firms in Hong Kong with British interests from leaving. (Jardine Mattheson moved their registered head office to Bermuda in 1984, and they have been followed by Hong Kong Land in March this year.) In almost every important issue affecting the future of Hong Kong, Britain has yielded to Chinese pressure and given in. These have included the 1988 Direct Elections issue and the drafting of the Basic Law.

It is widely believed that all Britain cares for now is to keep up the good relationship with China. Understandably, the British government will comply with the wishes of the Chinese government over the way Hong Kong's future should be developed. As a matter of fact, a great many members of parliament in Britain assumed that with the ratification of the Joint Declaration in May 1985, the Hong Kong problem was thereby solved. This kind of attitude is definitely not helpful to the Hong Kong government as it needs all the support it can get from Britain at this crucial period of time.

The British and Hong Kong governments should now be working together even more. They should stand on the side of the people of Hong Kong and protect their interests. What is going on in China regarding Hong Kong is not just a matter of internal affairs. The British government has a responsibility to see that the future of Hong Kong should be developed according to the terms laid down in the Joint Declaration signed by both China and Britain. Both the British and Hong Kong governments now have the awesome task of reflecting to the Chinese authorities the real

situation in Hong Kong, including its citizens' hopes and fears. They must all realize that a fully democratic and representative government must be developed in Hong Kong at a faster speed. In a personal letter to this author, the Rt. Hon. Edward Heath, a former conservative Prime Minister, said it well, "A proportion of directly elected seats in the Legislative Council should be introduced sooner rather than later if Hong Kong is to have an experienced representative legislature by 1997."

### 3. Citizens' Voice and Participation

In order to make the Hong Kong Experiment work, citizens in Hong Kong must play a more active role. They must stand up to fight for what is best for them and for Hong Kong. Hong Kong people must understand that it is not out of bounds to fight for a fairer share for the future of Hong Kong, the land where their future generations will be born and live.

It has often been said that most of the people in Hong Kong are very passive. They grew up in a colony where there was no civic education. They were taught to take whatever was given. 98% of them are Chinese. Traditionally, Chinese were only concerned with their family and their clan. They would stay away from social involvement, especially anything that has to do with the government.

However, beginning in the early 1980s, more and more young intellectuals and professionals came to realize that what Hong Kong needs is democracy. They realized, as Professor Fan Lishi said, "democracy is never granted." So they got together and formed several political groups. However, the authorities seldom took heed of their reasoning and their demands. This did not only discourage those who were actively involved, but also those who were watching. A sense of uselessness and helplessness soon developed. This helps to explain why in the March Urban Council and Regional Council elections, only 17% of the registered voters cared to cast their votes (the lowest in Hong Kong's history).

What are the wishes of the Hong Kong citizens? For most, they want to get on with their daily lives without any interference. Freedom is what they want. Only an open and democratic government can safeguard this.

Citizens of Hong Kong, on the whole, want to see China become more stable and prosperous. Although many do not have confidence in the Chinese government, they still want to contribute whatever they can to China. This is inborn patriotism.

How does the servant community called the church fare in all this?

In the 1950s, because of the influx of refugees from China, there were many felt needs. On the whole, the church in Hong Kong did well in responding to these needs, first with welfare and relief and then later with medical and health care, education and social work. About 20% of hospital beds, 40% of school places and more than 60% of social welfare work are currently provided by churches or church organizations. As time has passed, the institutional church has become very stagnant because it has to run a big enterprise and therefore has little or no time to study and think. Also, the church has to increasingly rely on government funding and contributions from the wealthy for its work, with the effect that it has become a part of the establishment. A senior journalist, Emily Lau, dubbed the relationship between the church leaders and the big businessmen as an "unholy alliance".

Like the wider community, Christians are also suffering from a confidence crisis. Fifteen out of thirty choir members of one of the biggest churches in Hong Kong have recently emigrated. Half of the department heads of two well-known Christian institutions have gone. One denomination with strong American ties has set up a fund to enable its pastors to emigrate to North America.

It is precisely at this time that Hong Kong needs the church; probably much more than at any other time in its entire history. The church needs to reexamine its faith in God and rededicate

itself to lead and to serve the many flocks in Hong Kong without shepherds. The church in Hong Kong must play the role of a comforter, giving the citizens of Hong Kong strength and hope to live by. It must also be a catalyst, encouraging Hong Kong citizens to give voice to their opinions and to become actively involved in Hong Kong's public affairs. In order to do so, the church must lead the way and speak up from time to time on issues which may affect the livelihood of the masses. No government (at least not in Asia) encourages opposition. Can the church play the role of the loyal opposition and criticize the government when its decisions and policies are not in the best interests of the entire community?

The authorities, for sure, are not keen to cultivate a political leadership which is independent in its thinking (i.e. which does not toe the official line). They are not eager to promote political education. (Hong Kong prohibits political education in schools.) In other words, they are not in a rush to have "democracy" introduced in Hong Kong.

If the Hong Kong Experiment is to work, these are the essential ingredients: an early introduction of a fully representative and democratic government; intense nurturing of political leadership and a full-scale push on political or democratic education for all citizens, especially students and young people. The church can play a key role in all these areas.

Recently, two major opinions have emerged. One has been formed by the wealthy business people and professionals. They advocate the least change possible. They want to maintain the "status quo" because this is to their advantage. (Right now they are enjoying immense power and privileges.) The other has been formed by young intellectuals and professionals who have more contact with the grassroots. They insist that democracy is the best solution for Hong Kong's future. The former has the backing of China. The latter is on the side of the masses. In this tug-of-war, the church is of some importance. If the church follows the teaching in the Bible, it has no choice but to throw its weight behind the efforts to promote a democratic government. In the

end, whether the Hong Kong Experiment will work or not depends on whether the social environment in Hong Kong will entice the citizens to stay, to live happily and work meaningfully.

#### 4. Support of the International Community

Hong Kong, "Borrowed Time, Borrowed Place" as it has been called by the famous author Richard Hughes, has been trying to find its place in the international scene. It is now an international city. It has become one of the most important financial centers in the world. It has the world's busiest container port and its total exports rank thirteenth in the world. Hong Kong has been able to achieve all this in a relatively short period of time because it has had strong support from the international community. Now, as it is going into the "One Country, Two Systems" Experiment, it requires even more support and understanding from the international community.

When the Joint Declaration was signed in September 1984, it received a great deal of attention. Many people hailed it as a peaceful means to resolve international disputes. A few even thought that it was a novel and valuable experiment. It has a lot of bearing on the unification of Taiwan with the mainland. Some even went on to say that it may show a way for the reunification of Korea and of Germany.

In order to maintain Hong Kong as an international city, free trade and travel are of vital importance. Even after 1997, Hong Kong is promised an independent status in trade negotiations. Since 1985, more and more countries have promised to recognize Hong Kong citizens' "British National - Overseas" passports after 1997.

But in order to keep Hong Kong as a thriving international city, basic human rights for all citizens as stated in the international covenant on civil and political rights and the international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights, must be guaranteed.



The almost six million people now living in Hong Kong deserve more freedom and political space. Increasingly, there are democratic aspirations calling for adequate measures to safeguard basic human rights in Hong Kong in the future. The international community should understand that these are genuine quests. They are not synonymous with anti-China sentiments. The international community's concern for human rights in Hong Kong and in China is certainly not meddling in China's internal affairs. Especially from the Christian point of view, every human being deserves the right to live freely and meaningfully and without unnecessary restrictions. This is because these rights are God-given. Governments exist to serve their citizens and protect all their inherent rights.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, the "One Country, Two Systems" Experiment is basically a very difficult task - to put a capitalist region under communist state. If it works, it will not only benefit Hong Kong but also China, and perhaps the rest of the world. In order to make it work, there must be sufficient insulating devices for Hong Kong and democracy must be introduced to Hong Kong as soon as possible. China and Britain must trust one another and work hard together on these crucial points. Hong Kong citizens should not be afraid to speak their minds. The international community should give its full support to Hong Kong and be friends to Hong Kong citizens as they try to work out what is best for their future. The Hong Kong church of course can help in this process and try its best to enable all this to happen.

## 2

### *The Future of Hong Kong*

#### **Confidence Crisis**

Hong Kong people were badly hit by the June 4th massacre in Beijing and its aftermath (which included the massive arrest and execution of dissidents - one source suggested at least 120,000 have been questioned or arrested throughout the country - the purge of intellectuals both within and outside the party, and the systematic propaganda campaign - telling plain lies). For these events and happenings once and again reminded Hong Kong people (45% of them fled China because they could no longer bear with its system and way of life) very vividly all the political movements in China in the past 40 years, especially the notorious 10-year cultural revolution (1966-1976). These political movements caused ordinary citizens extreme hardship in their day to day life, deprived them of basic dignity and freedom (all have to tow the official line of thinking) and inflicted upon them fear and distrust of other people, their closest kin included.

Already, since the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration in December 1984, approximately 150,000 people with money and skills have emigrated to Canada, Australia, U.S.A., New Zealand and other countries. They do not want to face the eventuality that Hong Kong be returned to China on July 1, 1997. June 4th caused the confidence of Hong Kong people in China and Hong Kong's future plummeted further. People are seeking ways to leave Hong Kong. In mid-July, when the Singapore government announced that it will take 25,000 middle-class income families,



hundreds and thousands of people scrambled to get an application form. Within a few days, 350,000 application forms were distributed by the Singapore Commissioners' office in Hong Kong. If the governments concerned do not make an effort to stop this emigration tide, Hong Kong may very well be disintegrated in mid- 1990s.

### **Economic Strength Alone?**

One of the world's foremost management experts, Tom Peters, was quoted by SCMP on 7th October saying, "Hong Kong should use its natural business strengths - its small, entrepreneurial firms and its active capital markets - to ensure its future."

To use Hong Kong's economic strengths to ensure its future seems to have gotten momentum and widely shared by the business community in Hong Kong. Just recently, the Stanford Research Institute released its HK\$4.5 million survey (commissioned by a group of influential business leaders). It mapped out a five-part strategy for Hong Kong's future. It recommended the improvement of Hong Kong's infrastructure and the stepping up of manpower development. The Hong Kong governor, Sir David Wilson, in his third policy speech delivered on 11th October reinforced this kind of thinking. He stated that in the next 17 years, the government will spend HK\$127 billion to build a new airport to improve its port facilities and to expand the tertiary education (in 1990, 7,000 will be admitted to degree courses; but in 1995, this will be increased to 15,000 permitting 1 out of 4 high school graduates to further his or her education).

What is behind this is exactly what China wants to see: that the Hong Kong people continue to work hard, mind their own business, leave politics and hence, leave China alone. Lee Kwan Yiu, the Prime Minister of Singapore, recently gave the same kind of advice to the people in Hong Kong. This has become a dominant view in Hong Kong. Repeatedly, Hong Kong people received this kind of warning from China: don't overstimulate China; don't meddle in China's "internal affairs" (meaning human rights issues).

## **Linked Yet Separate**

Hong Kong depends on China incessantly. China supplies Hong Kong with more than half of the food stuff and 70% of water it needs. Hong Kong also relies on China to control its people from overflowing to Hong Kong. (Hong Kong allows 75 legal immigrants from China a day and China will take back all the illegal immigrants from Hong Kong.)

China depends on Hong Kong, too! China earns about one-third of its foreign exchange from Hong Kong. China gets a great deal of technological know-hows and experience from Hong Kong. China also obtains huge international financial arrangements through Hong Kong.

Yet, China and Hong Kong are separate and must remain separate for their own good. Hong Kong cannot survive with a "controlled" economy and social system. If Hong Kong is going down the drain, then China will become a loser as well. That is why China introduced the "One Country, Two Systems" principle in reclaiming the sovereignty of Hong Kong.

Now, let us turn our attention to the Hong Kong system. It is generally known that Hong Kong's success (now it has become one of the world's leading financial and commercial centers) is due to its entrepreneurial skills, a reliable labor force, an efficient civil service, as well as its good harbor facilities. Few are acquainted with the facts that Hong Kong is a metropolis ruled by law; its judiciary is completely independent and citizens enjoy immense freedom. All these are possible because the colonial government in Hong Kong is accountable to the British government which is one of the oldest democracies in the world.

## **Democracy in Hong Kong**

As Hong Kong is moving towards 1997, and as its people have become more mature, it's very natural that democracy be introduced in Hong Kong.

It's a two-pronged approach: (1) full-scale democratic education must be pushed ahead in full-speed; and to set a good example, the Hong Kong government must try its best to engender an open and democratic atmosphere in all its operations; and, (2) a fully representative and democratic government must be introduced before 1997 (meaning 100% of all the legislative councillors and the Chief Executive are all elected by Hong Kong people on a one- person-one-vote basis).

A democratic government, elected by all, answerable to and supported by the people is very vital in ensuring the Hong Kong system continue to work after 1997. A free economy must be backed by a democratic government. All governments concerned (China, Britain and Hong Kong) must try to work together to ensure that a government which is firmly rooted in Hong Kong be born sooner rather than later.

Unfortunately, this is not the view shared by all. It is no secret that the Chinese leadership does not want Hong Kong to have a fully democratic government. Because of its strong objection, the British-Hong Kong government changed its mind of not introducing direct election in Hong Kong in 1988. A great many influential business leaders also objected because of their personal interests (they want to side with the future boss; and also they believe a democratic government will give them fewer privileges).

As to the political groups in Hong Kong, they are being pressured by time (the Basic Law Consultation period will end on 31st October). So after a long period of tough negotiations, they have come up with a consensus model for further discussion: by 1997, 40% of the legislature will be directly elected and 60% in 2003. So now, the pressure is on China.

## **China - The Determining Factor**

Since the ratification of the Joint Declaration in May 1985, Hong Kong has entered the transitional period. In less than 8 years, China will resume the sovereignty over Hong Kong. China

has repeatedly stated that its future policies in Hong Kong would be guided by the wishes of the people in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong is a very pluralistic society. Opinions expressed are always diversified, especially on matters relating to the future government model. To date, China's inclined to listen to the opinions expressed by the business sector (especially those with interests in China trade).

But after June 4, people in Hong Kong seemed to be together. With few individual exceptions (the so-called leftist elements), most people in Hong Kong do want democracy to be introduced in Hong Kong more swiftly. Look at what the conservatives say. The EXCO and LEGCO members advocated that one-third of the legislature be returned by direct election in 1991; no less than 50% in 1995 and 100% in 2003; and that the Chief Executive be directly elected by the people of Hong Kong no later than 2003. The 89 Basic Law consultative committee members, representing the business sector, also revised their timetable: 40% of the legislature be returned by direct election in 1997 and 60% in 2001; and the Chief Executive be directly elected in 2003!

After June 4, China's attitude changed too! First, China was extremely annoyed with the anti-Chinese sentiments expressed by the Hong Kong people (on 2 consecutive Sundays, 21st and 28th May, more than a million people took to the streets and expressed their strong feelings against Premier Li Peng's government who was about to use force to crack down on peaceful demonstrations by the students in Beijing). China has objected that Hong Kong acted as an anti-revolutionary base.

Then, China was very unhappy with the British government who had taken a high profile to condemn China and to pressure China to revise certain clauses in the draft Basic Law (like stationing of troops in Hong Kong after 1997). China found it difficult to swallow especially before the unfortunate events in June, Britain consistently let China to have the final say in almost all issues about Hong Kong.

So China has become very irrational. On 7th October, it suddenly refused to accept the illegal immigrants sent back from Hong Kong. It has been widely rumored that the top leadership in Beijing asked the Hong Kong and Macau office to tighten its control over Hong Kong, especially on matters relating to the future S.A.R. government arrangements. Perhaps that explains why China wanted to back up the Bicameral System (Two Chambers Legislature, with 50% members in the lower house returned by direct election).

It is hoped that China will have some sense very soon. China must understand that no one in Hong Kong has ever seriously challenged the "One Country" concept. Yes, there are people who are very dissatisfied with the present regime, but Hong Kong people are in no position to topple the Beijing leadership. The 5.8 million people in Hong Kong cannot fight the 1.1 billion people in China (1:200 ratio). But what Hong Kong people want to insist is the separation of "Two Systems". China cannot expect Hong Kong people to be dictated by China, follow its standards and be regulated by China's thinking. (Even British government realized this point and did not insist on Hong Kong people to do things the British way.) In fact, what Hong Kong people want has been put forth in the Sino-British Joint Declaration. What Hong Kong people are asking is that the letter and spirit of the Joint Declaration be truly reflected in the Basic Law.

## **Moving Ahead**

Hong Kong has gone through tough time before: the Japanese occupation (December 1941 - August 1945); the sudden influx of refugees from the mainland, causing the population to double in three years (1949-1951); the trade embargo during the Korean War, ending its entrepot functions (1951-1953); the riots in 1967; being placed in precarious positions during China's almost endless political movements, especially the cultural revolution in 1966-1976; the world oil crisis in 1973; the crash of the stock market in 1987... but Hong Kong people remained resolute and salient. They were able to ride though every storm and seize

every opportunity to further develop Hong Kong. For Chinese, the word "crisis" has two characters; danger and opportunity. Hard at work and immense capabilities to adapt to new situations and environment are two contributing factors toward Hong Kong's success.

Certainly China and Britain have put Hong Kong people into a most undesirable situation. Hong Kong people must not panic. They must have confidence in themselves and continue to move forward. There is a Chinese proverb: "Heaven helps those who help themselves." Hong Kong people must not give up!

In this long struggle, it is hoped that the international community can give Hong Kong a great deal of assistance and support.

It is often the case that in politics, people do give in to the powerful easily. From this angle, most of the countries would adopt the attitude: China cannot be offended, so let us just sacrifice Hong Kong. I hope this is not your attitude and this should not be a Christian attitude!

Then, there are those economists who argue that Hong Kong is strategically very valuable to China, to the Pacific Rim and indeed the rest of the world. So efforts must be put to keep Hong Kong stable and prosperous.

But in the final analysis, what is at stake is the 5.8 million people in Hong Kong. It is estimated that only 10% can and will emigrate. At least five million people have no other choice but to continue to work and live in Hong Kong. They need all the understanding and encouragement from Britain, from China and especially from the international community. Please be their friend.



### 3

## ***Hong Kong: "Two Countries, One Victim"***

### **Hong Kong Goes Back to China in 1991**

After more than two years of tough negotiations in September 1984, the Chinese and the British governments came to an agreement about the future of Hong Kong. The essential aspects of this Sino-British Joint Accord, in the form of a Joint Declaration duly registered with the United Nations, are:

- a. Hong Kong, a British Crown Colony since 1842, is to be returned to China and become a Special Administrative Region of China on July 1, 1997;
- b. China, using the "One country, Two Systems" principle, will allow Hong Kong to enjoy a high degree of autonomy except in defense matters and foreign affairs;
- c. The socialist system shall not be practiced in Hong Kong and the existing capitalist system and way of life in Hong Kong shall remain unchanged for fifty years;
- d. The Chief Executive shall be selected from amongst Hong Kong citizens by election or through consultation and shall be accountable to the legislature;

- e. The legislature shall be constituted by election (again, only Hong Kong citizens will be elected, thus, fulfilling the "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong" principle); and,
- f. The existing judicial system in Hong Kong shall remain unchanged with the power of final adjudication added to it.

Immediately after signing the Joint Declaration, the Hong Kong government set up an assessment office to monitor citizens' acceptance of it. It was found that 81% of the citizens of Hong Kong considered it acceptable. On the whole, people at that time believed that this agreement guaranteed that after 1997 all the ingredients which make Hong Kong successful would be kept. In addition, Hong Kong citizens would have its own government.

Soon after, this rosy picture changed rapidly and dramatically. According to one opinion poll in July 1987, only 28% of local citizens thought that they could accept the Joint Declaration. One month later, according to another opinion poll, only 21% thought so. Increasingly, events in China and Hong Kong have convinced local citizens that China has no intention of keeping both the government and all their promises.

## **China Breaks Its Promises to Hong Kong**

Soon after the ratification of the Joint Declaration in early May 1985, the Chinese government undertook the task of drafting a Basic Law for the Future Administrative Region of Hong Kong. This Basic Law will be the mini-constitution for Hong Kong after 1997. Its essential elements come from the Joint Declaration.

To begin with, Beijing appointed 59 Basic Law drafting committee members: 23 prominent citizens from Hong Kong and 36 from the mainland. Then Beijing put together a 180-member Basic Law consultative committee. Most of its members were invited by Beijing although a minority were recommended by the various professional/community groups in Hong Kong. The in-



tention was obvious. The Chinese leadership wanted to listen to what the local citizens (especially the wealthy) had to say. As a matter of fact, between 1982-1985 the top Chinese leadership promised on several occasions not only to listen to the views and opinions of Hong Kong citizens, but to honor and act according to the wishes of these same people.

Soon people were to find out these were merely empty promises. The Chinese leadership had no intention of allowing Hong Kong people to govern Hong Kong in the way Hong Kong people see fit. China has no intention, whatsoever, of granting Hong Kong democracy.

After four-and-a-half years, the drafting process was completed on February 17, 1990. The results were so poor and the drafting process so scandalous that many local and overseas journalists called it a farce. However inadequate, the Chinese National People's Congress will give the Basic Law formal approval in late April.

Take Hong Kong's future political system as an example. The Basic Law says that in the elections for the 1997 legislature, 20 out of 60 members (33.3%) will be returned on a one-person-one-vote basis. This should be increased to 30 (50%) in 2003. It does not specify when Hong Kong can have a fully elected legislature by general election. This not only goes against the wishes of Hong Kong citizens. It also contradicts the Joint Declaration in letter and in spirit.

When the debate on the future political system was at its peak in 1987, the Chinese leadership urged Hong Kong citizens to come up with a consensus. They said they would accept the consensus model as the blueprint for the future. After much effort, representatives of the democrats, the professionals and the business community came up with a consensus. They called for 40% of the legislature to be returned by direct election by 1997. The unofficial members of the current Executive and Legislative Councils (representing the establishment in Hong Kong) advocated that by

1991, one-third of the Hong Kong legislature should be directly elected. They said that half of the seats should be directly elected in 1995 and all the seats by 2003. These two proposals certainly fell short of demanding a fully democratic and representative government in Hong Kong by 1997. Nevertheless, according to most of the polls taken during the period, most Hong Kong citizens supported either one of the models or both.

However, China supported neither. Instead, China is only willing to let Hong Kong people elect a third of their legislature by 1997. Some people say China is being very generous. But the fact is that China is not experienced with democracy. Chinese leaders look at it with a great deal of mistrust and apprehension. Furthermore, they are afraid that if they grant democracy to Hong Kong, Hong Kong will be out of their control. Top Chinese leaders have been terribly insecure especially after the Beijing massacre on June 4, 1989.

On June 4, and during the massive arrests that followed, the Chinese government not only cracked down on democratic movements in the mainland, but in Hong Kong as well. That is why it requested the Hong Kong government for a guarantee in writing that the territory would not be allowed to become a base for subversive activities. That is why it labeled Hong Kong's leading democrats as "anti-revolutionaries". Martin Lee and Szeto Wah, two of the most outspoken members of the Basic Law drafting committee, were literally kicked out of the committee because of their criticism of the Chinese leadership's handling of the student demonstrations in Beijing, Shanghai and other cities in the mainland.

By doing these things, the Chinese government not only breached its agreement with the British government, but with the citizens of Hong Kong as well. In a way, China has pushed its way through. It has imposed its own will on the citizens of Hong Kong. But in this process, it has also lost its respect amongst those citizens. Hong Kong people have lost all their confidence in the

Chinese government. So, ironically, China becomes the bigger loser.

### **Britain Abdicates Its Responsibilities to Hong Kong**

When the Sino-British agreement on Hong Kong's future was first reached, the British government strongly commended it to the people of Hong Kong. A White Paper published in September 1984 says, "Her Majesty's government is confident that the agreement provides the necessary assurances about Hong Kong's future to allow the territory to continue to flourish and to maintain its unique role in the world as a major trading and financial center."

The British Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary used every occasion to assert Britain's firm and continued commitment to a secure future for Hong Kong. The Foreign Secretary has visited the territory four times since the signing of the Joint Declaration. But soon, the citizens of Hong Kong discovered the British commitment is but empty words. First, London promised to introduce direct elections in 1988. Then it retracted. In a November 1984 policy paper the Hong Kong government adopted, "... a cautious approach with a gradual start by introducing a very small number of directly elected members in 1988 and building up to a significant number of directly elected members by 1997." As it turned out, there was no direct election in 1988 at all because of vehement objections from China. It was a real setback for democracy in Hong Kong. It is an open secret that the British government is allowing the Basic Law, and hence China, to dictate the pace of democracy for Hong Kong before 1997.

The British government consented with China on other issues as well. The Chinese government has insisted that the British government solve the Vietnamese refugees problem in Hong Kong before 1997. (There are still more than 50,000 Vietnamese refugees staying in Hong Kong "first asylum" region.) So, the British government allowed the Hong Kong government to introduce the mandatory repatriation policy hastily, resulting in a flurry of condemnations from the international community.

Then came the "Bill of Rights" issue. Mainly at the request of the legal profession, the Hong Kong government had wanted to draft a Bill of Rights. Local human rights advocates argued the bill should not only cover a wide scope of human rights, as outlined in the two international covenants, but also it should have the power to override existing and future laws. This bill was to be published by the end of 1989, as promised by the governor in his annual policy speech in October 1989. But again, because of China's objections, it has not been published to this day. Many believe that when it is published, it will be a watered-down bill. It will be far from sufficient to guarantee citizens basic human rights after 1997.

The British government has abdicated its constitutional and moral responsibility towards its citizens in Hong Kong as well. About 3.25 million Hong Kong residents were born in this British Crown colony. But unlike citizens in other British colonies, Hong Kong citizens cannot enjoy full British citizenship rights (like the Right of Entry, Right of Abode, etc.) In other words, of the 8.5 million citizens in all the existing British colonies, the 3.25 million in Hong Kong are treated very unfairly!

Since the Beijing massacre, there has been a consensus of opinion among the people of Hong Kong that the British government should restore full citizenship rights to its citizens here. It is not that the citizens in Hong Kong want to emigrate to the British isles. But they feel that in order to continue to live and work in Hong Kong even after 1997, they need an insurance policy or a fire exit. A lot of people saw this need immediately. Some even voiced their support for this demand. Because of immense pressure at home, the British government finally announced that 50,000 Hong Kong families (a total of no more than 225,000 persons) would be given full British passports. The criteria have yet to be worked out. Most likely, those professionals whom Hong Kong can least afford to lose will be high on the list of people who qualify for the scheme. But many think the number is still far too small. It will not help the Hong Kong situation much.

On the contrary, it will create a sense of divisiveness among Hong Kong citizens.

Confidence over Hong Kong's future continues to slump!

With the exception of a few young intellectuals and pro-Beijing workers, citizens in Hong Kong have never had confidence in the Chinese communist regime. More than 45% of the citizens in Hong Kong fled China. They have had a good taste of what it means to live under a communist system.

Despite assurances from top leaders in both China and Britain, big business has also showed it is not confident about Hong Kong's future. Jardine, the top British trading firm in Hong Kong, moved its registered office from Hong Kong to Bermuda in early 1984. Hundreds of other companies have since followed Jardine's lead.

In the five years since the agreement was signed, approximately 150,000 Hong Kong citizens have emigrated, mostly to Canada, the U. S. A. and Australia. After the Beijing massacre, more and more people want to leave. In early July 1989, when the Singapore government announced that it would take 25,000 middle-income families from Hong Kong, more than 350,000 application forms were handed out in a matter of days!

After the undemocratic Basic Law was finalized in mid-February of this year, a survey showed that Hong Kong citizens' confidence had plummeted to its lowest point ever, even three percent lower than after June 4. According to another recent opinion poll, two-thirds of the citizens in Hong Kong said that they do not have confidence in Hong Kong under the communist rule.

On the surface it is clear that Hong Kong citizens do not want to lose the living standards the capitalist system brings. These are the fruits of their hard work. But deep down, they are most afraid of losing the freedoms they now enjoy. Just look at 1997. There is no strong Bill of Rights. There is no democratic political struc-



ture controlled by Hong Kong citizens. On the other hand, there is a very undemocratic Basic Law, full of loopholes the Beijing government can use to interfere. Promises made by the Chinese government in the 1984 Joint Accord have not been honored. Promises that the views of the Hong Kong citizens would be respected have all been shattered. It has come to the point that those citizens who are concerned for Hong Kong's future have serious doubts about the commitment by both the British and Chinese governments to work out a reasonable future for Hong Kong.

### **Hong Kong Must Move Ahead**

Realistically, only 10% of the citizens in Hong Kong have the qualifications to emigrate and will emigrate. How about the 90% likely to remain behind? These 5 million people deserve a better deal for their future.

The brain drain is hurting Hong Kong. At least 50,000 professionals and middle management personnel have left the territory since 1984. Many experts predict that if this trend is to continue, by 1992 or 1993, Hong Kong may very well disintegrate.

The Hong Kong government has been put into a very undesirable position. It constantly receives a great deal of pressure from both the British and Chinese governments. Right now, its strategy to build a future for Hong Kong is to spend HK\$127 billion (or US\$16.5 billion) in the next decade and a half to improve Hong Kong's infrastructure. A new airport, improved port facilities and a huge expansion of tertiary education are high on the agenda.

But to ensure a future for Hong Kong, it is just not enough to rely on better infrastructure. Fuller participation from citizens must be enhanced. The government and voluntary agencies must step up their efforts to promote civic and democratic education. But first, the government must create a more open and democratic atmosphere for the entire society. Draconian laws, like the cur-

rent public order and film censorship ordinances, should be repealed immediately.

For the sake of a stable Hong Kong, the British government must revoke its strategy of trying not to provoke China. In the long run, a stable Hong Kong will only benefit both Britain and China, and in that regard, the rest of the world. China should also realize it stands to gain if it gives Hong Kong a free hand for further development. Hong Kong is an important "bridge" between China and other major trading nations in the world. Hong Kong is too important for the modernization of China.

The international community has a key role to play too. At this crucial stage, Hong Kong needs the support of many friends. Human rights and freedom are universal concerns. An echo from the outside can go a long way to bolster local struggles for democracy.

But it is the Hong Kong citizens who count the most. Hong Kong has gone through a great deal of difficulties in the past 40 years: the total destruction committed by the Japanese during the Second World War; the influx of multitudes of refugees from the mainland from 1949-50, again in 1962, as well as during the cultural revolution; the trade embargo during the Korean War (rendering the entrepot functions of Hong Kong to full-stop and jeopardizing Hong Kong's lifeline); the precarious position it was in during China's almost incessant political movements; the oil crisis in 1973; the crash of the property market in 1981 and of the stock market in 1987. Throughout these crises, Hong Kong citizens remained resolute and salient. They were able to ride every storm and seize every opportunity to further develop Hong Kong. Hong Kong is now one of the world's most important financial centers. It ranks 11th among all trading nations in the world and 6th if the European Economic Community (EEC) is considered as one entity. In the Chinese language, the word "crisis" has two characters: danger and opportunity. Hard work and immense ability to adopt to new situations and environment are two key factors of Hong Kong people's success. As they face a very uncer-

tain future, they must work together even harder. For the sake of future generations, they should even consider paying a price and making some personal sacrifices. Hong Kong citizens must unite and stand up together to reflect the true picture about Hong Kong to the Chinese authorities and to voice their views about the genuine needs of Hong Kong: continuation of the present system; the rule of law; an independent judiciary; the respect of human rights and individual freedoms. In order to safeguard all of these, full democracy must be implanted long before 1997.

Hong Kong has been victimized by the British and the Chinese governments together. But Hong Kong citizens must resist developing a victim's frame of mind. No matter how difficult it is, Hong Kong citizens must try to be the masters of their own destiny. For here lies the future of Hong Kong.



## 4

### *Human Rights in Hong Kong*

#### **Inadequate Past**

To the outside world, Hong Kong is known as the Pearl of the Orient. Every year, millions of visitors from all over the world come to Hong Kong mainly for holiday and shopping. To those who know Hong Kong well, they hail Hong Kong as a successful example of free enterprise. Despite its extremely small size (with 5.7 million citizens living in just about 1,000 square kilometers), it is now ranked as the world's sixth largest trading entity. It has the world's busiest container port. It is also one of the most vital financial centers in the world.

Superficially, citizens enjoy a wide range of human rights and freedom. Nevertheless, there are still a great many Draconian laws existing. A case in point is the Public Order Ordinance. In Chapter 245, Clause 13, it states that any procession (public rally or demonstration) has to be authorized by a licence issued by the Commissioner of Police. The Commissioner is empowered to lay down any conditions he sees fit to any application. On March 6, 1988, to celebrate the International Women's Day, several women organizations wanted to hold a mass rally outside the Legislative Building. Despite the fact that they had obtained a licence, they were interrupted constantly by the duty police officers. According to the police officers, the women were not allowed to sing, speak nor chant slogans because these were the conditions laid down in

the licence. This caused an uproar the following days. Since then, the police have been more restrained. The fact that the law enforcement bodies used these Draconian laws sparingly or that most of the time these laws were applied very leniently, is certainly not comforting to most of the citizens in Hong Kong for they can deter people from freely expressing themselves.

The Hong Kong citizens are deprived of many important human rights. For example, they cannot exercise their political rights. The whole political system in Hong Kong is colonial. To this day, there is no democracy in Hong Kong. When the British government decided to hand back Hong Kong to China, the Hong Kong citizens were not consulted. In this way, the British government took away from the Hong Kong citizens their fundamental right - the right to self-determination. The Hong Kong citizens are deprived of the right to receive political education. The Education Ordinance forbids schools to conduct political education or any other political activity. Finally, the British government took away genuine citizenship rights of the Hong Kong citizens as of 1962. It is interesting to note that of all the eight million citizens in all the British Colonies, only the 3.25 million born in Hong Kong do not have full citizenship rights. They neither have the right of entry nor the right of abode in the United Kingdom.

## **Shaken Present**

On July 1, 1991, Hong Kong will cease to be a British Crown colony. It will go back to China. Just this fact has chilled the hearts of its citizens. The majority in Hong Kong are familiar with the human rights situation all over China, including Tibet, especially during its incessant political movements. After all, more than 40% of Hong Kong citizens fled from China. They had a good taste of what it means to live under the communist regime. The Beijing massacre on June 4, 1989, and the massive arrests of demonstrators throughout the country in the following weeks sent shivers down the spine of practically everybody living in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong citizens are divided regarding how to face the reclaiming of Hong Kong's sovereignty by China. A great many have decided to emigrate. Already 150,000 have emigrated, mainly to Canada, Australia and United States, in the five years since Britain and China reached the agreement about the future of Hong Kong. After June 4 last year, the number has greatly increased.

There are those who think that the best way to face the future regime is to keep quiet so that the regime will be secure and, hopefully, benevolent enough to grant them basic rights they need.

But there are also those who feel very strongly that they must ask the present as well as future governments to do everything possible to guarantee the citizens' basic human rights. Basically, they ask for two things: (1) That a full and representative government be established in Hong Kong before 1997. They believe that only a government which is elected by universal suffrage will respect its people's wishes. A government supported by and accountable to the people, and hence more likely to safeguard the citizens' basic human rights. (2) A Bill of Rights to be enacted immediately. This Bill of Rights should cover at least the scope of rights as stated in the two international covenants on civil and political rights and on economic, social and cultural rights. Moreover, this Bill of Rights should be entrenched in the Hong Kong legal system and be given an overriding legal status. In other words, if any existing or future enacted laws contradict this Bill of Rights, they have to be declared void.

### **Pessimistic Future**

To outsiders, the above two requests seem to be very reasonable. But the Chinese leadership viewed both measures negatively. As a matter of fact, the perimeter for the Hong Kong citizens' human rights has been laid out in the final version of the Basic Law (the mini-constitution for post-1997 Hong Kong) which

has yet to be rubber-stamped by the People's Congress of China in late April, 1990.

According to China, no other law can be more supreme than the Basic Law (Bill of Rights, included). Though in Article 38 of the Basic Law, it states that the provisions of the two international covenants on "Civic and Political Rights" and on "Economic, Social and Cultural Rights" shall remain in force, yet since they are not laws in Hong Kong and since China is not a signatory in both covenants, experts from the legal profession are skeptical about whether it will be of any value relative to the safeguarding of human rights in Hong Kong after 1997.

The Hong Kong government, since two years ago, has intended to draft a Bill of Rights with supreme status. It promised to publish it in late 1989. But because of pressure from China, it has not done so. Many believe that when this Bill is eventually enacted, it will be watered down to the extent that it becomes useless.

In the midst of strong protest, China decided to give Hong Kong less than one-third of democracy. In the Basic Law, it stipulates that the Chief Executive will not be elected by the citizens on a one-person-one-vote basis; and, of the 60 legislators in 1997, only 20 will be returned through direct elections. This is to be increased to 30 by 2003. Whether it will be further increased will be subject to a review in 2006!

The British government did not stand firm on such important issues. Originally, it wanted to introduce direct elections in Hong Kong's legislature in 1988 (as promised by Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Minister, in a press conference in April 1984, and included in the Hong Kong government policy paper on "Further Development of Representative Government" in November 1984). But because of China's vehement objections, the plan was scrapped.

Again, after June 4, 1989, the Hong Kong citizens demanded a faster pace of democracy. Leading democrats supported by the

Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons in London, advocated for the return of 50% of the legislators by direct election in 1991 and 100% in 1995. The unofficial members of the Legislative and Executive Councils, representing the Hong Kong establishment, wanted 50% in 1997 and 100% in 2003. Even the conservative businessmen wanted 40% in 1997. But because of objections from the Chinese leadership, the British government changed its mind and deemed it important to give up its plan and "converge" with the Basic Law.

The British government gave in to the demand of the Chinese government on other vital issues as well.

When the Chinese government told Britain that it must solve the Vietnamese refugees problem before 1997 (Britain asked Hong Kong to become a first asylum region at the Geneva conference on Vietnamese refugees in July 1979), the British government hurriedly introduced the mandatory repatriation policy causing an uproar in the international community. This did not only tarnish the image of Hong Kong but also jeopardized the life of those Vietnamese boat people who may be genuine refugees.

When the Chinese government became too sensitive about criticism launched by the Hong Kong citizens on the manner by which top Chinese leadership handled the peaceful student demonstrations last spring, the Hong Kong political advisor had to write an undertaking to China stating that the Hong Kong government has no intention of allowing Hong Kong to be a base for anti-revolutionary and subversive activities. Many fear that as 1997 approaches, human rights in Hong Kong would be further curtailed as the Hong Kong government is bound to become a lame duck government in this transitional period.

The Hong Kong citizens' confidence in the future continues to slump. According to one opinion poll, two out of three Hong Kong citizens said that they do not have confidence in either the Chinese nor the British government. The same poll indicated that the citizens' confidence after the Basic Law was finalized was even

3% lower than the poll conducted several days after June 4. On the whole, Hong Kong citizens are most afraid that a lot of their basic rights will be taken from them after 1997.

Hong Kong faces a very grim future. But it is not entirely hopeless. The Hong Kong citizens have faced equally tough times before. Because of their hard work and commitment, they were able to ride through every storm and seize every opportunity to further develop Hong Kong. If more citizens decided to stay, to remain resolute and salient, Hong Kong may be able to overcome the present crisis.

But Hong Kong needs friends. Hong Kong needs the support from the international community. So, please be our friends; understand our predicament and give us your generous and staunch support.

## 5

### *The Post June 4 Wrangles Between China & Hong Kong*

#### **China: Fit to Rule?**

The Beijing massacre on June 4 last year shocked the whole world, the communist bloc included. June 4 and its aftermath revealed to the world just what a communist regime can do in order to hold on to power. How can a government use such excessive force (tanks and submachine guns) to quell peaceful demonstrations by its own students? No wonder in the U. S. State Department's 1989 Annual Report on Human Rights Conditions around the world, it asserted that China was the second worst, with Iran at the bottom of the list.

To the people of Hong Kong, the tragic events around June 4 were very existential. They would not have the privilege to sit back and reflect on what happened in China, how China has violated basic human rights. For in another seven years, China will become Hong Kong's sovereign state. What happened in Tiananmen Square in 1989 could very well happen in Hong Kong in 1997, especially a small faction of the Hong Kong people are so used to exercise the freedom of speech. Many in Hong Kong now worry on whether China is fit to rule Hong Kong after 1997.

Already, soon after the ratification of the Sino-British Joint Declaration in May 1985, many wondered whether the top Beijing leadership understood the Hong Kong realities: what makes this capitalist metropolis tick, what are the hopes and fears of its



people? Part of the problem is that the Chinese leaders were only willing to listen to the views of the business tycoons. Another part of the problem is that China is very afraid to adopt a "let go, let live" attitude. For them, to rule is to control - the tighter, the better.

A case in point was back in November 1985 during a press conference, the de facto Chinese representative in Hong Kong, Xu Jiaturu, accused the British government of deviating from the Sino-British Accord by trying to introduce direct election in the Hong Kong legislature in 1988. Well, this kind of threat caused a great consternation among people at every level. The stock market dropped by almost 100 points. Thus, the people in Hong Kong came to realize that China is adamant about having a genuine representative government in Hong Kong.

Since 1985, the confidence crisis about the future of Hong Kong surfaced. Hundreds of reputable firms followed the example of Jardine, the leading British firm in Hong Kong, by moving their registered offices outside of Hong Kong. About 150,000 citizens, many with considerable wealth, professional skills and experiences have emigrated to other countries in the last five years.

This massive exodus increased by leaps and bounds after June 4. Reportedly, one out of four people in Hong Kong wanted to leave Hong Kong for good. Some of them even did not care where they might go... Tonga, Venezuela, Thailand,.... Macau! (Some of these countries have never been heard of by a lot of people in Hong Kong.) When the Singapore government announced in early July 1989 that it will take 25,000 Hong Kong families in the coming several years, more than 300,000 applications were snatched in a matter of days.

According to a report issued by the Secretary of Education and Manpower in early May, by 1996 the net outflow of Hong Kong citizens is estimated at 425,664 persons. In other words, in the next six years, about one out of 13 persons will leave Hong Kong. This is indeed shocking!

Many Hong Kong citizens, 45% of which fled from China, are very familiar with the human rights situation in the mainland. The endless political movements have caused millions and millions of innocent people to suffer from physical and mental torture. But since 1979, after Deng Xiaoping became China supreme leader, there were signs of liberalization. The student demonstrations to protest against corruption at all levels of the communist bureaucracy met by the brutal suppression shattered all their illusions. June 4 took away all the masks of the top Chinese leaders. It also exposed the fundamental flaw of the communist system: the party is more important than the people. But the most important of all is the supreme ruler or rulers, be he Deng Xiaoping, Honnecker or Ceaucescu.

### **Hong Kong: A Subversive Base?**

Hong Kong and China are interdependent. Most of Hong Kong's supplies like water, food stuffs and other daily necessities (e.g. cheap clothing) come from China. On the other hand, China imports a lot of professional and managerial skills from Hong Kong. In 1988, China earned 37% of its foreign exchange from Hong Kong.

On the whole, Chinese in the mainland (cadres and top leadership included) used to look at Hong Kong with a great deal of admiration, jealousy and at times, even appreciation. The top leaders considered Hong Kong an asset to China's modernization programs. This is one major reason why China was lenient in setting out the terms to reclaim Hong Kong's sovereignty back in 1984. (Of course, another reason was more political. One of China's important national policies concerns the territorial integrity. All top leaders want to get Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan back at the earliest possible time.)

But after June 4, the Chinese leaders seemed to have changed their minds. They now viewed Hong Kong as a potential liability.

While demonstrations were being held from mid-April to the beginning of June in Beijing, Hong Kong citizens also held numerous gatherings, put hundreds of advertisements on the daily newspapers, put up signboards and stickers echoing Beijing students' demands and later denouncing the hardline leadership of Deng Li Yang. On two consecutive Sundays, a million citizens took to the streets making headlines throughout the world. The Hong Kong Alliance for the Support of Patriotic and Democratic Movement was founded. Millions of dollars were collected to support activities pertaining to the promotion of democracy in China.

The Chinese leadership was caught off-guard in the strong international response towards the brutal crackdown of students in Beijing and other parts of the country. Hong Kong was looked upon as a false or distorted information disseminating center, resulting in all these international condemnations and economic sanctions.

Later, the Chinese leaders were back on their feet again. They asserted all the pressure they could muster to make sure that the British-Hong Kong governments would not allow Hong Kong to be a subversive base. Under pressure, the political advisor of the Hong Kong government then had to issue an undertaking on October 26, 1989 to the New China News Agency (NCNA) stating that the Hong Kong government had no intention to allow Hong Kong to be used as a base for subversive activities against the China government. To demonstrate this point, four activists were arrested during the National Day celebration hosted by NCNA. Also last week, five leading democrats in Hong Kong were prosecuted under the Summary Offenses Ordinance for leading a week of sit-ins in February to protest against the passage of the undemocratic Basic Law. The latter case was viewed as a deterrent from citizens' participation on anti-Chinese activities and demonstrations in view of the fact that the first anniversary of June 4 was only a few days away.

The fact of the matter is: most Chinese in Hong Kong are patriotic. For example, they would like to see Hong Kong go back

to China. They would also like to contribute to China's ambitious modernization programs. But what they do not approve of is the present communist regime. Many regard the present regime as a major hindrance toward China's overall development. A few may have serious doubts on whether the present one-party political structure and controlled economic policies are to China's own interests. But Hong Kong is too small and its people too apolitical that no serious-minded people think Hong Kong can ever become a subversive base against China.

### **Hong Kong Government: A Lame Duck?**

The Hong Kong government is colonial. Although its citizens accept it, (since they have no other choice) it seldom enjoys their support. Since the 1997 issue surfaced, it has a very unenviable task to do. It has been under constant pressure from both the Chinese and the British governments. Yet it has to openly declare that its primary responsibility is to protect Hong Kong's interests.

The Hong Kong government realizes that after June 4, citizens' confidence crisis, and hence, the brain drain problem have reached the peak. It has become imperative that it must do something to maintain Hong Kong's stability and prosperity. This is its 4-point program:

- To improve Hong Kong's economic strength by spending HK\$127 billion in the next decade-and-a-half to build a new airport, to improve its port facilities and to expand its tertiary education.
- To give Hong Kong British citizens an insurance policy by requesting the British government to grant them full British passports.
- To enact a Bill of Rights in Hong Kong as soon as possible.
- To speed up the democratic process in Hong Kong.

On the whole, the British government responded favorably. In the passport issue, despite strong criticism from the opposition party, it decided to give 50,000 Hong Kong citizens British passports (a total of 225,000 persons including dependents).

But the Chinese government viewed these moves as the British-Hong Kong government's taking advantage of the post-June 4 situation. For example, the Chinese government considered the British as trying to maintain its presence and influence by granting key personnel full British passports. The Chinese government also was adamant that the Hong Kong government drew up the "Rose Garden" grandiose plan and committed the future SAR government to such huge financial undertaking without prior consultation and approval. Regarding the Bill of Rights, the Chinese government took it to mean that the British-Hong Kong government wanted to undermine the Basic Law which was already promulgated in late April.

But the real battle relied on the speed of democracy in Hong Kong. After June 4, Hong Kong citizens unanimously wanted a faster pace for democracy. Despite strong representation, the Chinese government was willing to grant one-third democracy to the Hong Kong legislature in 1997 (i.e. 20 out of 60 seats will be directly elected).

Undoubtedly, in the transition period, a great many arrangements are needed to be made. But on crucial issues such as the political structure, China appeared to be extremely firm. This is especially so after June 4. It is still in their minds that the students' uprising in Beijing last April, following Hu Yaobang's death, is a result of the liberalization on the part of the top leadership. (Zhao Ziyang was blamed for this.) Furthermore, after June 4 the Chinese leaders became even more insecure and unsure. So tightening their grips on things including "Hong Kong arrangements" have become the order of the day.

As far as the British government is concerned, it is behind the Hong Kong government only superficially. Once its own interests

are threatened, it will invariably back out. In its dealings with China over the "democracy" issue and in its negotiations with America over the "Vietnamese refugees" issue are but two examples.

So where does all this lead to regarding Hong Kong and its 5.8 million people's destiny?

### **Hong Kong People: Key to Hong Kong's Future**

After June 4, most of the people in Hong Kong did not think that Hong Kong has a good future. By one estimation, about 20% of the people were actively planning to emigrate. But the fact remains that majority of the people are not "qualified" to leave.

The sequence of events which led to the British government to deny Hong Kong citizens full citizenship rights in the United Kingdom and the signing of the Sino-British Joint Accord regarding the future of Hong Kong have already alluded to a "sell-out" of Hong Kong by the British government. To rely on the British to ensure a reasonable future for Hong Kong is unrealistic.

After June 4, people in Hong Kong also felt that they could neither rely on the present Chinese leadership. Many purport that the only hope Hong Kong has is the change of Chinese leadership or even the whole political system in China. Of course, judging from the course of events in Eastern Europe in the fall of 1989, that kind of thinking is not entirely wishful.

But in the final analysis, the people of Hong Kong will have to learn to rely on themselves. It is difficult. It requires personal sacrifices for many. But that is the one decision people in Hong Kong can make and the only meaningful thing they can do. Hong Kong people must stand up together and fight for what is needed to ensure a future of Hong Kong.

Hong Kong people have done it many times before - to face and to overcome awesome challenges and hardships: the influx of



refugees from the mainland between 1949 and 1951, in 1962 and during the cultural revolution; the U. S. trade embargo during the Korean war; the oil crisis in 1973; the collapse of the property market in 1981; and, the collapse of the stock market in 1987.

Hong Kong is now one of the most important financial centers in the world. It has the second busiest container port. Volume-wise, it is the sixth trading entity if the EEC is counted as one. Hong Kong must capitalize on these achievements and move on.

Hong Kong people have brought forth an economic miracle. It must now be examined - what are the contributing factors toward this success:

- a. Hong Kong has an excellent harbor with a vast hinterland having one-quarter of the world's population.
- b. It has a very effective civil service. Rule of law is respected and followed.
- c. Its citizens enjoy a reasonable amount of freedom. It has an independent judiciary to guard against the abuse of powers.
- d. It has adopted a laissez-faire policy. The Chinese work ethic therefore, can be at work at its best.

Hong Kong people must try to preserve these factors and one more key element: democracy.

According to the Sino-British Accord, China is to reclaim Hong Kong sovereignty under three principles: 1) "One Country, Two Systems"; 2) the future SAR government will be highly autonomous; and, 3) Hong Kong people will govern Hong Kong. I believe these are very crucial ingredients for Hong Kong's future development. In order to make these work, Hong Kong must have a fully democratic and representative government established before 1997. It is because only such a government (with



100% of the legislators and the Chief Executive elected by the people of Hong Kong on a one-person-one-vote basis) can prevent Hong Kong from unnecessary intervention from the central government in Beijing. It is also true that only a government which is elected by its people will be answerable to them, and hence, willing to reflect their wishes and protect their basic human rights. Finally, only such a government can enhance its own citizens's sense of participation and enjoy their support. As Hong Kong develops, it needs its own people's full participation.

So Hong Kong people must continue to fight for full democracy.

But democracy means more than a political structure. It also means that ordinary citizens have a better understanding of its true spirit and be willing to participate in such a system and to ensure this system is working to its fullest extent. So full-scale promotion of democratic education is another thing Hong Kong people must do.

This is a very crucial period of time in Hong Kong's history. Hong Kong people must be together and fight for what is needed for its future. But it needs friends and support from the international community. By giving your support to Hong Kong, you are helping to maintain Hong Kong an international city. As a matter of fact, it is only if Hong Kong remains an international city that it can be of any use to China and the rest of the world. China may or may not know it, but it needs Hong Kong to reach out to the outside world. The rest of the world needs Hong Kong to reach China, too!

We treasure your solidarity with us. Please respond generously. Thank you very much.

## 6

### ***Hong Kong: Realities and Prospects***

#### **State of Affairs**

To most outsiders, Hong Kong, traditionally called the Pearl of the Orient, is a beautiful city. It is a shopping paradise. Even for those who know the eventuality of Hong Kong, that it will be returned to China in less than seven years, they believe Hong Kong is strong enough to take care of itself. After all, Hong Kong people are both resilient and resolute. In the past forty years, Hong Kong went through countless spells of extreme hardship but it has gone from strength to strength. It has become one of the most important financial centers in the world. It is now the sixth largest trading centers in the world, if EEC is counted as one. Surely Hong Kong can make full use of its economic strength to ensure its future. China stands to benefit if Hong Kong continues to be stable and prosperous.

But this is not the true picture of Hong Kong. Despite its seeming affluence, Hong Kong citizens are leaving in the thousands. Since the British and the Chinese governments reached an agreement in 1984 regarding the future of Hong Kong, more than 200,000 citizens have emigrated, a great majority to the English-speaking countries in the west, like Canada and U. S. A., increasingly in Australia and New Zealand as well. According to a government report published in early May 1990, it was estimated that the total outflow of Hong Kong citizens would be 426,000 before

1996, i.e., about 1 in 13 people now living in Hong Kong will be gone. This is indeed shocking!

Already, the brain drain problem is hurting the day to day running of Hong Kong seriously. Hong Kong now runs like a big corporation. It relies heavily on a great many experienced managers and countless dedicated professionals. Increasingly, both the government and the private sector are finding it extremely difficult to combat this acute manpower shortage. (There will be 93,000 professional vacancies by 1996, according to the same report.)

For those who decide to stay a little bit longer and for the majority who does not have the resources (both skills and money) to go, their outlook has turned extremely laid back, with a few exceptions. It seems that all they care about now is to do the minimum in their job and at the same time, try their best to maximize their earnings and incomes.

Take the civil service as an example. For so many years, the civil service is the vital force to keep Hong Kong on the course of development. But in recent months, many considered it a destabilizing factor. For it has been plagued daily with industrial actions or threats of such actions. One by one, civil service unions have demanded for higher pay, better promotion prospects and improved working conditions. The undesirable elements in Hong Kong as well as from across the border certainly take advantage of this overall morale failure in Hong Kong. Serious crime rate surged in the past six months to an alarming state. Just in the recent two weeks, a fire was set in a Chinese restaurant and a private club adjacent to it, causing six deaths and 24 seriously injured. The residence of the Police Commissioner was burglarized. A firebomb was thrown at a police station; fortunately, causing only minor damages. All this makes one wonder whether Hong Kong still can claim that it is one of the safest cities in the world.

## Confidence Crisis

There is definitely a very deep-seated confidence crisis amongst Hong Kong citizens. This is caused by the fact that the communist China is to become the sovereign state of Hong Kong on July 1, 1997.

Back in September 1984, when the Joint Accord regarding the future of Hong Kong was reached by the two governments concerned, 81% of the people polled (by the assessment office set up by the Hong Kong government) said that they would accept the accord. (Of course, the alternative is that there will be no accord and China will just take back Hong Kong according to its liking.) If we study the contents of the agreement, we have to admit that it is not bad from the Hong Kong perspective. It outlines how China would treat Hong Kong after 1997 according to three important principles: (i) "One Country, Two Systems", the Chinese system will not be imposed on Hong Kong; (ii) Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong, so democracy is possible; and, (iii) the future Special Administrative Region government will be fully autonomous, with the exception that the central government will take care of Hong Kong's defense and foreign affairs (excluding trade).

Soon, China decided to turn this "political agreement" into a legal document. It took four years to complete the job. But it was the process itself which turned out to be a nightmare for Hong Kong people.

All along during the Sino-British negotiations in 1982-1984, regarding Hong Kong's future, the Beijing leadership time and again assured Hong Kong citizens that their views and wishes would be heard and honored. But in the years that followed, Hong Kong people discovered that this important promise never materialized. For example, in summer of 1986 when 1.1 million Hong Kong citizens expressed their strong views through a signature campaign that China should not build a nuclear plant in Daya Bay, 40 kilometers from the city center of Hong Kong, China went ahead and built it. (This just happened after the Chernobyl acci-

dent in April 1986. If a similar accident should happen in Daya Bay, it would be a total disaster for there are no escape routes for the six million inhabitants of Hong Kong. The Pacific Ocean is behind us.) When a majority of Hong Kong citizens and the Hong Kong government wanted to introduce direct election in the legislature in Hong Kong in 1988, China objected vehemently. So the whole idea was abandoned. Finally, despite strong protests from all Hong Kong sectors, China officially promulgated the undemocratic Basic Law in April 1990 which only grants Hong Kong one-third democracy in the legislature in 1997. It did not only go against the wishes of the Hong Kong people, but it also deviated from the Sino-British Joint Accord in both letter and spirit.

But Hong Kong citizens dealt with the most severe blow with the Beijing massacre on June 4, 1989. It revealed to and reminded the Hong Kong people (45% of which fled China within the past 40 years) once again in most vivid terms just what the communist regime is about. The regime is always afraid of losing its power and control. The leadership, therefore, can never accept any challenges, all dissenting voices included. As a matter of fact, they would do just anything to hold unto their authority and image. The endless political movements like "The Great Leap Forward" and "The Ten-Year Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution" are some very solid examples. In these movements, millions of lives were wasted. Human dignity, freedom and basic rights were totally disregarded.

So, Hong Kong citizens strongly resent the Beijing leadership. A million people took to the streets to express their strong feelings on two consecutive Sundays. Naturally, the Chinese leadership became very annoyed and uncomfortable. They were convinced that Hong Kong has the potential of becoming "an anti-revolutionary base". They were even more resolute that full democracy should not be granted to Hong Kong.

Hong Kong citizens did not trust the present sovereign government as well.

When the British government decided to let go of Hong Kong, it immediately took steps to get rid of its responsibilities to its citizens in Hong Kong. Through the British Nationality Order in 1986, all those born in Hong Kong therefore, have to become "British nationals overseas". Strictly speaking, all Hong Kong citizens are made "stateless" by the order. Right now, there are about 8.5 million citizens in former British colonies, only 3.25 million living in Hong Kong are deprived the right of entry and the right of abode in the United Kingdom. When the British government decided to negotiate a future for Hong Kong, Hong Kong citizens were never consulted despite the fact that it is their destinies which were at stake.

In the 12-year transition period (1985-1997), Britain can do a lot for Hong Kong. It can establish a fully democratic government in Hong Kong. It can make proper safeguards on citizens' basic human rights and freedom. It can provide a full British passport to all Hong Kong citizens to assure them that the British government assumes full constitutional as well as moral responsibility to each and everyone of its citizens. No, the British government did not do this because China objected. The British government wants to maintain a good relationship with China at all costs because of mutual trade benefits. Despite a ban by the European Economic community (EEC) on ministerial contacts between China and any EEC member country after June 4, 1989, the British government sent their Deputy Financial Minister to have talks with China in July.

Perhaps the most serious of all is that Hong Kong people have lost confidence in themselves. They do not think that they can cope with the eventuality that Hong Kong be under a communist regime. Yes, Hong Kong people together have created an economic miracle in Hong Kong. But in this process they have all turned into one dimensional beings. The colonial system, especially its educational system, has only given all its citizens a "tunnel vision".



## How About the Church?

The church in Hong Kong is not immune from the confidence crisis. According to a recent survey done by the Hong Kong Christian Institute, only half of the Christians polled said that they would stay in Hong Kong after 1997. Twenty percent said that they have made plans or making plans to emigrate. About 30% said that they are exploring ways to leave. One denomination actually used funds earned from their kindergarten school to assist their pastors to leave.

The morale problem within the church in Hong Kong is just as serious. A question often asked is, "How can Christians lose their confidence in God who is the Lord of history?"

For evangelical Christians, they were never taught to take the context seriously. It is no surprise that they feel very comfortable at the existing accustomed system and way of life, but not a changed one.

For Christians from the mainline denominations, their Christian education was very minimal and hence, their faith very infantile. Their leaders, both lay and ordained, are just far too busy in meetings and administrative work. You will be utterly astonished to learn that the churches in Hong Kong are running a very huge business enterprise. Together, they provide more than 60% of the social welfare work, more than 40% of the schools and about 20% of the hospital beds in Hong Kong. These leaders have little or no time to do any reading and thinking. Their pastoral work is extremely shabby, to say the least. But the most damaging is the fact that financially, this ecclesiastical social service empire has to rely on government funding as well as huge donations from the business tycoons. Gradually, most denominational leaders and senior clergymen have become a part of the establishment. They stand to gain to uphold the present system which favors the rich and the powerful. The prophetic voice of the church is therefore, extremely weak. In recent years, there were occasional reports by the mass media in Hong Kong that individual clergymen were



suppressed by their church elders because they were critical of the local "establishment", or too concerned with the direction for Hong Kong's future development.

### **Hong Kong Citizens as Key to its Future**

If Hong Kong citizens cannot rely on the Chinese nor the British governments to work out a future for them, then they must learn to rely on themselves. Yes, the task is extremely difficult but history tells us that nothing is impossible. Hong Kong citizens must accept the fact that nothing is impossible. Hong Kong citizens must accept the fact that Hong Kong will go back to China. There should not be any question about the "One Country" concept. But Hong Kong citizens must insist on the "Two Systems" concept as well. That is to say, the political, economic and legal system in the mainland should not be imposed on Hong Kong. Furthermore, Hong Kong citizens should have full rights to elect the Hong Kong government after 1997. After all, these are all stipulated in the Sino-British Accord.

The confidence crisis, of course, revealed to us that few Hong Kong citizens are willing to stand-up and be accounted for. In the final analysis, the confidence crisis is a crisis of identity. Hong Kong citizens have very vague or even no sense of belonging. Of course, the colonial system and the British government have to assume full responsibility for this. Therefore, 1997 provides a golden opportunity for Hong Kong to change course. Hong Kong must concentrate to develop a system whereby citizens feel that for better or for worse, they belong to Hong Kong. In this reconstruction process, Hong Kong citizens must develop fully as human beings. These should include at least capabilities to think and to make responsible decisions independently and they should have the commitment to work for the good of the whole community.

In real terms, the most urgent task in Hong Kong is therefore, to create a democratic culture. For only such a culture can recreate the value and dignity of every person; can reaffirm that citizens

are the centers and not the periphery of any society. As such, the government is the servant and not the master of any society. It is there to perform certain functions as prescribed by law and its sole purpose is to strive for the good of the whole society and for the well-being of all its citizens. A democratic culture enables all citizens to live freely, free from fear and unnecessary interference. Therefore, a democratic culture also include a fully representative and democratic government whereby the chief executive and all legislators must be elected by all citizens on a one-person-one-vote basis; and that an independent judiciary must be upheld at all costs. For only such a government is an open government that can protect its citizens' basic human rights sufficiently, that is willing to reflect the views and wishes of its citizens and be answerable to them. Furthermore, only such a government can enhance citizens' participation and belonging on which the future development of Hong Kong greatly depends.

### **What Can the Church Do?**

The church in Hong Kong must affirm that it is living in the midst of a Kairos. It must seek new ways to contribute to the whole social process leading to 1997 and beyond.

But first, the church must overhaul its understanding: the church must not be for self gains, for the edification of its own empire. But rather, the church is in Hong Kong to serve and to find new ways to respond to societal as well as individual needs. The church in Hong Kong has too long been identifying with the wealthy and the powerful. It must now choose to be with the masses especially to enable those who must stay in Hong Kong to speak up and fight for a fairer arrangement for their future. The church must seek ways to actively support the democratic movement and all efforts to create a democratic culture in Hong Kong. Traditionally, churches in Hong Kong spend far too little on theological education. (Perhaps less than 1% of the total support for the dozens of denominational offices and close to 1,000 parishes and congregations.) Churches must give full support to seminaries and all efforts in laity education.

## **What Does the Hong Kong Christian Institute Do?**

Founded in September 1988 by 120 Christian leaders in Hong Kong, Hong Kong Christian Institute attempts to work for the renewal of the Hong Kong Church and enable Christians and churches to make significant and relevant contributions to Hong Kong's overall development.

First, we aim to enable individual Christians to think, to think independently and theologically. We organize regular theological fora. We publish a bimonthly theological journal entitled "Reflection, two series of books: one on "Church and Society" and the other on "Faith and Life". Also our staff are invited frequently to preach, to speak and to be leaders of courses and seminars.

Second, we try to strengthen the nurturing dynamic of the church by assisting Christians and churches to establish study, prayer, action and sharing cell-groups. We believe that the "fellowship" life and experience of Christians today are of utmost importance. The traditional supportive systems seem to have all broken down. This explains why the morale fails at all levels in the Hong Kong society today.

Third, we provide resources in civic, political and democratic education to high schools by publishing a series of packages of materials. We respond to key events and public policies at the idea level. We are also trying to help mode a practical vision for Hong Kong's future from the Christian perspective.

Fourth, we constantly solicit international attention and support for Hong Kong. A genuine, stable and prosperous Hong Kong is not only good for its six million inhabitants, but it is also vital to the development and modernization of China and indeed beneficial to the rest of the world. It deserves your full support and friendship.

It is true that almost all people in Hong Kong feel deep in their hearts that Hong Kong has a rather gloomy future. But we still

have almost seven years before it is under the communist rule. China may undergo a great deal of changes in the next seven years, too. So, we must not give up. Instead, we should rededicate ourselves and take on these challenges we have in front of us. This is what it means to have faith in God. This is the faith of our fathers. This should be our faith, too!

## *The Other Side of Hong Kong*

### **Introduction**

Hong Kong is known to the world mostly through the eyes of tourists. Millions of people visit Hong Kong annually. In 1990, there were 5.9 million tourists who visited Hong Kong. To the majority of tourists, Hong Kong really rises up to its name, the "fragrant harbour". Its scenery on both sides of the harbour is spectacular. Its services, both public and personal are well-ordered. It is a shopping paradise. (HK\$40 billion was spent by tourists in Hong Kong in 1989.) Indeed Hong Kong is the Pearl of the Orient.

Hong Kong is also known to the world through the eyes of international business people. Hong Kong's telecommunications are amongst the most advanced in the world. Hong Kong has a very efficient government and a most dependable and talented work force. The overall environment is very conducive to investment. All in all, it is one of the most important financial centres in the world. It is a vibrant city.

However, Hong Kong is far from perfect. There is still a long way to go for it to become a just, participatory and sustainable society. The purpose of this presentation is to show some inherent weaknesses of Hong Kong. These are the key areas Hong Kong needs to improve if it wants to be further developed.

## **Affluent, Yet Fruits Not Shared By All**

When Britain acquired Hong Kong in 1841, its Foreign Secretary described Hong Kong as "a barren rock... a barren island with hardly a house built on it". But this picture changed drastically as a result of constant migrants from the mainland of China. In the 1870's, Hong Kong had started to serve as a vital gateway between the western world and China. By the turn of the century, it was already a famous entrepot. In the last 50 years, Hong Kong experienced many ups and downs. The Second World War, the Chinese Civil Wars in 1947-49, the Korean War in 1950-53, the incessant political movements in China especially the proletariat cultural revolution, (1966-1976), caused very serious interruptions on Hong Kong's development. But despite all this, because of Hong Kong people's determination and resilience, Hong Kong developed by leaps and bounds. Hong Kong has become one of the world's leading financial centres. In 1990, Hong Kong ranked number 8 in terms of total exports (No.5 if EC is counted as one. The order is EC, U.S.A., Japan, Canada and Hong Kong).

Despite the fact it has no natural resources Hong Kong's economic achievement brings affluence to its people. In 1990, according to *Asia Week*, Gross National Product per capita in Hong Kong was US\$11,000, only after Japan and Brunei in Asia.

Do all the 5.7 million people enjoy the fruits of this unique success which was brought about literally by their own sweat and blood? The answer is negative.

According to Hong Kong government figures in 1990, there were still 330,000 people living in squatter huts on the hillsides; 32,100 living on small boats; 52,000 Vietnamese living in camps and 4,000 "caged men" (They are single, mostly elderly men living in apartments of roughly 600 square feet. In one apartment there would be 15 three-tiered bunk-beds. Each person occupied one. This is where he sleeps and stores all his belongings. Since most would build a fence around their own bed space, the whole apartment looks like it is full of cages, hence the word "caged



men".) Also, there are hundreds of street- sleepers. The living conditions of all these people are appalling!

Despite Hong Kong's economic development in recent years, the standard of living or the quality of life of the masses has not showed a marked improvement. Basically this is due to the tax policies in Hong Kong. Greatly influenced by the big business, Hong Kong has adopted a low tax structure (the maximum corporate tax is 16.5%, both profits tax and salaries tax are 15% maximum). Openly, the government maintains that a higher tax rate would drive away foreign investors. So to meet the annual increase of spending, the government decides to increase indirect taxes. (The government is planning to introduce sales tax in two years.) We all know that indirect tax hits the poor a lot harder than the rich. Take cigarette tax as an example. Before March, a pack of cigarettes cost HK\$12.5. The government decided to increase its tax by 200% in order to have an extra income of HK\$19 billion a year. That means a factory worker whose average income is HK\$5,200 per month will have to pay around \$350 more (or 7% of this monthly income) on cigarettes if he smokes a pack a day. While an office manager who earns HK\$40,000 will pay only less than 1% more). Many believe Hong Kong government's rapid increase in indirect tax and rates, postage, etc. and its approval of big increase of public transportation fares are the major contributing factor towards Hong Kong's high inflation rate (estimated at 12.5% for 1991).

The Hong Kong government seems to be less committed in the provision of public as well as social services to the wider community. "Privatization" is the order of the day (first railway, then housing, hospitals, and so on). It's been a long tradition that social services are provided to the general public at a nominal charge. Now the government wants to recover the real costs through charging substantial fees. All this is bad news for the lower class. Again, because of strong objection from the business community, the provident fund scheme has not been made compulsory, not even to say a comprehensive social security system like that of Singapore.



While the business and professional communities represent perhaps only 3% of the 5.7 million, they have amassed great wealth in the course of rapid economic development in Hong Kong. They enjoy incredible privileges. But the less educated and the working class are struggling daily in order to make ends meet. (According to a recent poll by a local newspaper, 25% of the people in Hong Kong considered themselves on the brink of poverty.) The gap between the rich and the poor is ever widening in Hong Kong as a result of its government being controlled by the former.

### **Free, Yet Its Citizens Are Deprived of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms**

Superficially, Hong Kong people are enjoying a broad scope of freedoms. But in reality, this scope falls far below international standards. By the government's own reckoning, there are 20 places in the Hong Kong laws which contravene the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Britain became a signatory nation in both the ICCPR and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 1976. This includes many Draconian laws, such as the Public Order Ordinance and the Film Censorship Bill. The controversial Film Censorship Bill aims to deter local people from antagonizing Chinese authorities. The Public Order Ordinance is an effective means to crush dissenting views. It states that public gatherings, including the use of loud-hailer in public must be approved by the Commissioner of Police, who can lay down any stipulations he thinks fit.

Hong Kong people are deprived of full political rights. The Governor of Hong Kong is sent from London. He appoints his top advisors to form the Executive Council which makes all important policy decisions. The legislature, which makes all laws and controls government spending, has always been government controlled, although in September 1991, the 1.7 million registered voters in Hong Kong can elect 18 out of 60 legislators. The people of Hong Kong are deprived of the right to nationality. As a result of the Nationality Act in 1981 and the Hong Kong (British National-

ity) Order in 1986, the 3.25 million people who were born in Hong Kong have been made "British nationals overseas". They are not full British citizens. Although ethnically and culturally speaking they are Chinese, they are not considered Chinese nationals until after 1997. That is, in this transitional period (1985-1997) Hong Kong Chinese do not have any national status.

But the most important point which must be raised is the fact that the people of Hong Kong were not consulted during the whole process of Sino-British negotiations regarding the future of Hong Kong. Here obviously, they were not talking about the future of a piece of territory, but more importantly the future and the livelihood of the people who live in this territory. This is a direct contravention of Article I of both International Covenants which say that all peoples have the right of self-determination.

Because of public pressure, the Hong Kong government decided to enact a Bill of Rights in October, 1989. But because of strong objection from the Chinese government, the draft is still being considered. Many fear that when it will be passed later, the Bill will be so watered down that it cannot be an effective measure to safeguard citizens' basic human rights, especially after 1997.

First, the scope of this bill is limited. It will only include provisions of the ICCPR, but not those of the ICESCR. Amongst many vital implications, one is most obvious. People in Hong Kong are deprived of the right to social security (Article 9).

Second, because of Chinese vehement objection, the Bill will not be given supreme status. It will be treated as another piece of legislation.

Third, it looks like it will not be entrenched either. So just like any law, the future legislature can have it repealed easily.

In sum, Hong Kong respects the "Rule of Law". There are obvious drawbacks and inadequacies in the Hong Kong laws regarding the safeguarding of basic human rights and freedoms.

However, the law enforcement bodies have shown restraint in applying them, giving its citizens enough breathing space in their day to day life. But when China takes over in 1997, it may be a completely different ball game. Furthermore, since China is not a signatory nation to both international covenants on human rights, it will be extremely difficult to monitor the human rights conditions in Hong Kong after 1997. This was the key concern raised by the U.N. Human Rights Commission meeting in April 1991 in New York. Since the British government has gotten used to giving in to Chinese demands, it is well recognized that at the end of the day, Britain will ignore the urge and the recommendations that it must try to take measures to safeguard the human rights of Hong Kong citizens after 1997.

### **Future Guaranteed, Yet There is an Unprecedented Confidence Crisis in Hong Kong**

The most senior ranking officials from China, Britain and Hong Kong maintain that the future of Hong Kong is guaranteed by the Sino-British Joint Declaration signed in December 1984. In fact the Hong Kong Governor has taken no less than six overseas trips to sell Hong Kong to European, American and Australian entrepreneurs assuring them that Hong Kong's future is secured because the Joint Declaration is its "bulwark".

But the people of Hong Kong see this very differently. In the report given by the government's assessment office in November of 1984, 81% of Hong Kong people said that they would accept the Joint Declaration. But according to two polls taken in July and August of 1987, such percentages dropped to 22 and 21 respectively.

It is not difficult to explain this phenomenon. Deng Xiaoping's ambitious modernization programs introduced in 1979 and the overall open policies enchanted the Hong Kong people. Furthermore, during the Sino-British negotiations in 1982-1984, the supreme leaders in China pledged time and again that they would honor the wishes of the Hong Kong people.

Their pledges were put to the test soon after. In July 1986, just three months after the Chernobyl nuclear plant accident, China announced that it would build a nuclear plant in Daya Bay, just 40 kilometers from Kowloon. Hong Kong people naturally were very concerned. So in three weeks, 1.1 million people expressed their objection through a signature campaign. China did not listen, but went ahead and built it.

The Hong Kong government, acting on the wishes of the majority of people in Hong Kong was all set to introduce direct elections in its legislature in 1988. But because of vehement objections from China, the Hong Kong government gaved in.

Hong Kong people became discouraged further when the elder statesmen forced the reform-minded Hu Yaobang, their handpicked General Secretary, out of office in January 1987!

Then, during the drafting of the Basic Law (the mini-constitution for post 1997 Hong Kong), Hong Kong people discovered the Joint Declaration could not be a document to guarantee Hong Kong's future. In crucial places, the Chinese interpret it very differently from what is understood by the Hong Kong people.

- a. The Joint Declaration states that the future Hong Kong legislature "shall be constituted by elections". Hong Kong's understanding is that all Hong Kong people will have a part to elect their own legislators. But the Chinese maintains that there are many forms of elections. "Appointment" is one form of election. Indeed China has its own way of electing their leaders. So China maintains that Hong Kong should not follow the western way of universal franchise (election on a one-person-one- vote basis)!
- b. The Joint Declaration says that before 1997 "it is the British-Hong Kong government's responsibility to administer Hong Kong with the object of maintaining and preserving its economic prosperity and social stability, and the Chinese government will give full cooperation". When

the British government tried to exercise this by introducing the right of abode scheme (attempting to keep 50,000 key personnel by granting them and their family members full British passports), a Bill of Rights, and to spend HK\$127 billion to build a new airport and to improve on the port and highway facilities, China became furious. To China, "cooperation" means whatever major decisions the British-Hong Kong government makes during the transition period, China must first be consulted. Furthermore, a consensus must be reached. This is why the building of the New airport in Chek Lap Kok has been put on hold, because China has not given its blessings.

The Joint Declaration is a political agreement. China spent four and a half years to put it into a legal document. This is the Basic Law. When carefully scrutinized, the Basic Law deviates in crucial places from the Joint Declaration both in letter and in spirit. That being the case, how can one hope that what has been laid down in the Joint Declaration, and crucial to Hong Kong's future (e.g. Hong Kong's autonomy) will materialize? But it was the downfall of Zhao Ziyang in May 1989, and the extreme tragic events in Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989 and its aftermath which inflicted the most severe blow to Hong Kong people.

So, there is an unprecedented confidence crisis in Hong Kong. Most of those who have the money, skills or relations have emigrated or are planning to do so. Between 1984-1989, 150,000 have left. In 1990, 62,000 did so. The government predicted that by 1996, 426,000 Hong Kong citizens would have migrated.

The majority of those who cannot leave or are not planning to do so are suffering from a low morale, probably the worst ever in Hong Kong's 150 years history as a port-city. This is very much evidenced by the surge in the crime rate and the incessant industrial actions taken by the various civil servants. The overall mood in Hong Kong is that everybody is for himself or herself. You just don't see any caring spirit around town, observed one young pastor. Many are afraid that if this should continue, Hong Kong



may disintegrate. One newspaper editorial commented not too long ago that Hong Kong's is like a big corporation. When it loses so many experienced managers and professionals (Hong Kong government predicted by 1996, there will be 93,000 vacancies amongst professionals and managers), it will break down some-day.

With all this, we can legitimately challenge the official story that Hong Kong's future is guaranteed.

### **Its Church Well-Run, But Irrelevant to the Social Process**

This is a rough picture of the Christian church in Hong Kong.

Eight percent of the total population are Christians, about 250,000 Roman Catholics and 230,000 Protestants (80,000 from mainline denominations or members of the Hong Kong Christian Council; 100,000 are evangelicals; and 50,000 are from independent congregations with no denominational affiliations). On the whole, the churches in Hong Kong are well-organized and smoothly run.

Together, they run approximately 1,000 parishes or worship centres. Many of the congregations operate kindergartens, study halls, social centres and the like. There are also 100 Christian groups or para-church organizations, and 15 seminaries and Bible schools.

The churches in Hong Kong are very busy. Pastors and lay leaders spend a great deal of time in committee and board meetings. The evangelicals are busy with church growth, the planting of new worship centres in the new towns, and massive crusades (featuring Billy Graham or Louis Palau). The ecumenicals are busy with the provision of social services to the wider community. More than 60% of the social work-related services, more than 40% of the high schools, primary schools and kindergartens as well as about 20% of the hospital beds belong to Hong Kong churches or

church organizations. One can say that the churches in Hong Kong is run just like a big enterprise!

Since the church leaders are so busy running this big enterprise, there is no time to think, and there is no time to really do a thorough job in Christian education. Theological education (both the training of the clergy as well as lay people) is neglected. There is an abject poverty of theological thinking.

There is more to this. Since the churches have to rely so much on the wealthy for donations and the government for providing funds, they have become a staunch supporter and partner of the societal establishment (or some may say the churches in Hong Kong is in fact a part of the establishment). Their primary objective is therefore to preserve stability, to maintain the status quo, so to speak. No wonder then from time to time, there are reports about suppression of socially active clergymen. A general tendency of isolation of theologians and "prophets" within the church has become the order of the day in the church in Hong Kong.

In this critical period of time in Hong Kong's history, it is expected that the church should use its influence to play a key role in providing leadership and direction. Many do turn to the church for comfort and guidance. On both counts, the traditional church fails miserably. The basic reason is that what the church had been doing all along was quite irrelevant to the social process.

What Hong Kong needs most now is a new social strategy. The old one came out from an elitist background, that let the wealthy and the best educated get what they want; and they would try to keep Hong Kong running and more benefits would be siphoned from the masses. This may work well in an archaic colonial system.

But Hong Kong will be in an entirely different ball game in 1997. On July 1, 1997, Hong Kong will become a Special Administrative Region of China, i.e. neither London nor Beijing will send officials to rule Hong Kong. According to the Sino-British Accord,



Hong Kong people will be in charge. In order for this to work out, the general public must be aware of their rights and responsibilities. Hong Kong people must be given genuine opportunities of participation in public and government affairs. The most urgent task now is public education. This is civic or political or democratic education. The church could do something about it. For a quarter of Hong Kong's population is within the reach of the church.

Another important factor to make Hong Kong's future work is to ensure the full implementation of the Joint Declaration in letter and in spirit. There are signs showing that both the Chinese and the British governments have more important ideas than Hong Kong and the Joint Declaration. The Chinese government wants full control of Hong Kong and its people. From this view human rights and freedom (especially press freedom and intellectual freedom) are only secondary. The British want a bigger share of the Chinese market. So they tend to give in to Chinese demands.

The church, with no political ambitions, could act as a referee. At least the church could play an active advocacy role relative to human rights and justice.

Fortunately, there are Christians or newly-formed Christian groups who are fully aware of these two societal needs and who decide to do something about them. They are the creative minority within the institutional church and are gaining momentum.

## **Conclusion**

This is an attempt to uncover some of the crucial facts and happenings in Hong Kong which few people, local people included, are aware of. Hong Kong has the potential to become a more just, participatory and sustainable society. Hong Kong's experience might be of great value to other developing countries in the world. But first we must tackle the few pressing problems: the ever-widening gap between the "haves and have-nots"; the inadequate safeguards for citizens' human rights and freedoms as

well as the general apathy of its people. The church has the potential to be a vital catalytic agent of changes and further development. If it carries too many heavy institutional problems and cannot move, then individual Christians and Christian groups and even concerned secular groups must do the job.

To conclude this lengthy presentation, I would like to ask you to pray for Hong Kong and support all local efforts in trying to make Hong Kong a more humane place. Thank you very much.

## 8

### *Whither the Hong Kong Experiment*

#### **The Experiment: Meaning and Implications**

On the 1st of July, 1997, Hong Kong, now a British Crown colony, will go back to China. According to the Sino-British Joint Declaration regarding the future of Hong Kong signed in 1984 and tabled at the United Nations, after 1997, Hong Kong will not be ruled directly by the Chinese government. Rather, it will form its own government with a high degree of autonomy except for defense and foreign affairs. It was also agreed that the Chinese systems will not be imposed on Hong Kong. Hong Kong can maintain its present social, economic and legal systems as well as its way of life for 50 years after 1997. This is the "One Country, Two Systems" concept created by Deng Xiaoping, the supreme Chinese leader. It's considered to be an experiment because it's never been done before in recent history.

The major reason why China wants this experiment is its paramount concern over "the territorial integrity" of China. It is a stated national goal that China not only wants to have its sovereignty extended to Hong Kong, but to Macau (a Portuguese enclave) and to Taiwan as well. The Chinese leadership recognized right away that should they impose the communist system into Taiwan, Hong Kong or Macau, these "capitalist" societies would be killed overnight.

From the economic perspective, China realizes that it gets at least one-third of its foreign exchange from Hong Kong. Hong Kong's investors provide 2,000,000 job opportunities for the people in Hong Kong's neighboring Guangdong Province. Reportedly, one-tenth of the Chinese population depend directly or indirectly on Hong Kong and Hong Kong's investment in China. Hong Kong is a crucial support base for the Chinese ambitious modernization programs. In sum, China stands to gain the most if it keeps Hong Kong a vital financing and business servicing center.

There are other ramifications of this "Hong Kong Experiment" too!

First, the Sino-British Accord itself shows a way to the peaceful settlement of international disputes. Negotiations can replace wars.

Second, it shows a way of co-existence for peoples with different backgrounds. 98% of the people in Hong Kong are Chinese. But over the past one-and-a-half centuries, they have traveled a very different path than their counterparts in China. Together with the colonial government, and using the territory's excellent geographical location and harbor, as well as their own talents and diligence, they have developed a *laissez-faire* system calling for little intervention from the government. On the other hand, the Chinese Communist System which was developed since 1949 is basically a "controlled system". China has 1.13 billion people. Hong Kong has about 5.67 million (the ratio is 200 to 1). The "One Country, Two Systems" concept may be an important way in allowing the minority to continue with the systems and the way of life they are used to. To put it in another way, the Hong Kong Experiment could show in a concrete way how the rights of the minority are safeguarded within the majority can or how the "culture" of the minority can be preserved, and not sacrificed or worst still, extinguished. Indeed we have seen over the past century too many examples of the annexation of land and its people by the powerful (be they in the majority or minority) with

total disregard of the culture and rights of the people in the annexed lands. People throughout the world who are concerned especially with human rights must watch closely how the Hong Kong Experiment is working out. Moreover, if they think it is a worthwhile experiment, they should spare no efforts to support it.

### **The Problem: Confidence Crisis**

It was most unfortunate that Hong Kong people were kept in the dark by their own government throughout the Sino-British negotiations regarding the future of Hong Kong. For it is not only the territory's future that is at stake, but their own future as well. The Senior Legislative Councillor at the time put it in a very succinct way, "The British only has the right to give back "the land" to the Chinese government but not "the people" who happen to live on this piece of land."

After two years of tough negotiations, an accord was reached. The government's assessment office found out that 81% of Hong Kong's people thought at the time they would accept it. This was partly due to the fact that Hong Kong people were not given any other alternative. The British Foreign Minister said that any agreement was better than no agreement at all; meaning, if there was no agreement, the Chinese would take back Hong Kong at their own pace and manner. And partly, also due to the fact that on paper the Sino-British Joint Declaration looked fairly promising.

But it was during the implementation of the accord that brought Hong Kong people literally to the state of despair.

According to two opinion polls conducted by Survey Research Hong Kong and another research institute in the summer of 1985, only 21% and 22% of the Hong Kong people said they could accept the Joint Declaration respectively.

To begin with, the intention behind the Joint Declaration was that the Chinese would do whatever is good for Hong Kong and/or whatever the Hong Kong people want. As a matter of fact

between 1982-1984, everyone of the top Chinese leaders, including Deng Xiaoping himself repeatedly went all out to assure Hong Kong people that their wishes would be respected and honored.

But soon the Hong Kong people were to find out that there was definitely a credibility gap between what the Chinese leaders promised and what they did. The Hong Kong people wanted China not to build a nuclear plant in Daya Bay, 40 kilometers from Kowloon. At least 1.1 million Hong Kong citizens expressed this wish through a 3-week signature campaign in the summer of 1986. Hong Kong people were afraid that should there be an accident like Chernobyl (The Chernobyl nuclear plant had a tragic accident in April 1986.), Hong Kong people had no escape route since the Pacific Ocean surrounds Hong Kong. But China went ahead with the plan in 1987.

Then, majority of Hong Kong people wanted to have direct elections introduced into the legislature in 1988. British-Hong Kong government concurred as evidenced by what Geoffrey Howe said in the Press Conference held in mid-April 1984 in Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Government white paper on "The Further Development of Representative Government in Hong Kong" published in November, 1984. But because of China's strong objections, it was not carried out in 1988.

Then came the Basic Law promulgated in April 1990. The Accord was no more than a political document. There was a need to base it and produce a legal document which will serve as the future Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's (SAR) mini-constitution. China spent four-and-a-half years to draft the Basic Law. If we take a closer look, the Basic Law deviated from the Joint Accord in letter and in spirit. If not amended properly, it could be impossible to have the future Hong Kong SAR government to have highly autonomous functions as stated in the Joint Declaration. In other words, only the "One Country" but never the "Two Systems" can materialize in the post-1997 Hong Kong.

But finally, it was the June 4 violent crackdown on the democratic movement in China and the aftermath of massive arrests and executions which dealt the most severe blow to Hong Kong. For it reminded the Hong Kong people about China's poor human rights record in the past 40 years, especially during the political movements such as the "Great Leap Forward" and the notorious "10-year Cultural Revolution". It reminded the Hong Kong people (45% of Hong Kong's population fled China in the last 40 years) once again what the Chinese rulers would do in order to hold to their power. These rulers will become Hong Kong's ultimate rulers as well after 1997.

During this course of events, more and more people became pessimistic towards Hong Kong's future. Many of those with money and professional skills would emigrate. Between 1984 and 1989, about 150,000 people left; in 1990, 62,000. According to the government by 1996, 426,000 people (or one in 12) would have emigrated. This is an alarming figure. For those who remain, they suffer a very serious morale problem. All they care now is to try to earn as much money as possible and enjoy a "good life". The "everybody for himself/herself" mindset is prevalent. Because of this, and because of the rapid loss of experienced managers and professionals, Hong Kong is at the brink of disintegration.

We can easily blame China in causing this unprecedented confidence crisis in Hong Kong. But in reality Britain is also a major culprit. For as Hong Kong's sovereign government, the British Government did not live up to its moral if not also its constitutional responsibility towards its citizens in Hong Kong. By taking away the right of entry to and the right of abode in the United Kingdom of 3.25 million citizens born in Hong Kong, in 1962 and 1981 respectively, it deprived these people a safety-net or a fire exit.

Neither did the British government try hard enough to fight for the interest of the Hong Kong people. On the contrary, it gave in to Chinese demands every time. Lord Caithness, the British minister responsible for Hong Kong, was candid enough to say in



September 1990 that Hong Kong people must not rely on the British Government too much. (One newspaper editorial the following day bore the title: "Hong Kong faces its future alone - Lord Caithness").

The Hong Kong government is another cause of the confidence crisis. To begin with, Hong Kong government is a typical colonial government. It depends on a few hand-picked "elites" to govern Hong Kong. It never would take its people in its confidence. Instead, it keeps its people constantly in the dark. Naturally it is difficult for the Hong Kong people to support its government.

It was painful to find out the "Big Business" which the Hong Kong government used to rely on turned out to be the first deserters! Jardine (the biggest Britain firm in Hong Kong) moved its registered office to Bermuda in March 1984. This was followed by 66 of the 299 listed companies. Hong Kong Bank (Hong Kong's central bank) also decided to create a parent company in London last December. Many of Hong Kong's trusted professionals and managers have also gotten foreign passports and a few have actually left.

The Hong Kong government itself is in disarray. Leadership is weak. They do not know how to handle the difficult Hong Kong - China relationship. After the June 4 events, the Hong Kong governor decided to salvage Hong Kong people's confidence by declaring that Hong Kong will spend HK\$127 billion to build a new airport and to improve its port and highway facilities. This immediately drew severe attack from China. For all along, China wanted a say in all important issues, especially during the latter transitional period (the first transition period was from the ratification of the Joint Declaration in May 1985 to the promulgation of the Basic Law in April 1990; the latter is May 1990 - June 1997). This "Airport Row" was indicative of Hong Kong government's insensitiveness to China. This kind of rows with China: over the pace of democracy in Hong Kong in 1987, the Right of Abode in

1989, the Bill of Rights in 1990 ..... is also a major factor towards the confidence crisis.

### **The Solution: Build Up the Hong Kong People**

What happened in the Soviet Union since 1985, in Eastern Europe in 1989, and in recent years in the Philippines, Taiwan, Singapore etc. indicated that there is a global trend: people all over the world have become more aware that they are the "subjects" and not "objects" in the society. Government authorities are by no means sacred. They are there, as Mao Zedong wrote so appropriately outside the Xinhua Gate (seat of the Chinese government), "to serve the people".

To enable the Hong Kong people to realize that they are the "subject" is the key to Hong Kong's further development as well as to the success of the Hong Kong Experiment.

This is by no means an easy job. 98% of the Hong Kong people are Chinese. The traditional mentality of the Chinese is that they care only about their own family. Societal affairs, including and especially government affairs, are of no concern to them. For the past century and a half these people have been under the colonial rule. The whole colonial system is geared to make their citizens passive. Therefore, they only know how to take orders and perhaps try to make the best out of what is being given.

Furthermore, 45% of Hong Kong citizens came from China. Hong Kong would not be considered as their home. The Hong Kong government spent little energy to create a sense of belonging even for those who were born in Hong Kong. The feeling of a "Hong Kong identity" is almost absent. So in a way, Hong Kong people are victimized. All they can do perhaps is to spend every ounce of their energy in making money. Hong Kong people have become one dimensional men and women. All they know is the economic aspect of life, but little about the political and the cultural aspects.

The first step that the government and concerned people in Hong Kong must take is to revamp the whole education system. School children, kindergarten and primary school pupils and high school students alike, must be taught to think rather than to obey. The primary purpose of education in Hong Kong must be to free, to liberate children from all kinds of "colonial" or "archaic Chinese cultural" bondage and to draw out the potential which is in them. Democratic education aiming to help children to be aware of who they are; to help them to think independently; and to engender a sense of social responsibility in their minds must be promoted at all levels, in schools, in youth centres as well as centres for the elderly.

The second thing which must happen in Hong Kong is that Hong Kong people feel Hong Kong is their home and that they will try their best to contribute towards its future.

Hong Kong government therefore has an awesome responsibility to create an environment that is conducive to have it happen.

1. Hong Kong government must radically change its tax system and its policies so that the gap between the rich and the poor be narrowed. Too long, Hong Kong has been a place only for the wealthy. These few wealthy people have been given too many special privileges. Hong Kong is becoming an affluent metropolis. But the fruits of affluence certainly are not shared by all who have worked hard to bring Hong Kong to this stage of development.
2. Hong Kong government must try its best to safeguard citizens' freedoms now and in the future. What Hong Kong people are afraid of is losing personal freedom. Men or women on the street would tell you that they would not mind being poor. Hong Kong had gone through many economic hardships before. But they dread to lose the security of personal safety.

What Hong Kong needs the most is the safeguarding of intellectual freedom and the freedom of the press. The former provides positive directions to development, and the latter a most effective checking mechanism. These freedoms are crucial for the Hong Kong Experiment and a better future for its citizens.

Despite Chinese vehement objections, the Hong Kong government must enact a Bill of Rights. Its scope must be based on both the international covenants (ICCPR and ICESCR). This Bill should be given the supremacy status and it must be entrenched in the Hong Kong legal system. Hong Kong government must also try to repeal all the laws which contravene the Bill of Rights. (By its own reckoning, there are 20 pieces of legislation of such nature.) The legal department as well as the legal profession must be encouraged to do more on public legal education. But first the legal department must step up its efforts to translate all Hong Kong laws into Chinese.

Rule of law and the independent judiciary are two important pillars for Hong Kong society. The Hong Kong government should spare all efforts to uphold both.

The Chinese government has a vital role towards the success of the Hong Kong Experiment. The best China can do to help Hong Kong is to have its hands off. Every time it interferes on Hong Kong affairs, Hong Kong people's confidence plummets further. China must realize that it has promised Hong Kong a highly autonomous status (with the exception of foreign and defense matters). It is illogical for China to maintain that it is their responsibility to protect the unborn Hong Kong Special Administrative Region between 1985-1997. Once the Hong Kong SAR is born, then China will not interfere. People in Hong Kong are not convinced about this line of argument. They are most afraid that if China interferes now, it will do more so after 1997.

Wu Xueqian, a Chinese vice premiere, said late last year that only China can speak for Hong Kong. Well, it is imperative that China should allow or even enable Hong Kong people to speak

for themselves. Moreover, if Hong Kong people do speak up, China should listen (as so often promised by their top leaders).

The British government must not give up on Hong Kong. In the long run, Hong Kong is vital to China's development as well as the interests of the Western countries, the British included. Hong Kong is not only a supplier, a servicing centre, but it can also be a model to China's development. So far, Britain has given in to China's demands on Hong Kong almost every time. But for the good of Hong Kong and China as well, Britain must stand up to China and fight for what is best for Hong Kong. What Hong Kong asks now is that the Sino-British Joint Declaration regarding the future arrangement of Hong Kong must be fully implemented, in both letter and spirit. The Dalai Lama, whom the British Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister refused to see when he visited Britain early this year, but was received warmly by the President, the Vice-President and the Congress when he visited U.S.A. later had this to say, "China only bows to the powerful, but never the weak."

How about the church in Hong Kong? Certainly the church should understand a lot better that people are the "subjects". This is a crucial Biblical insight. Men and women were created in God's image and likeness. They are the masters (Genesis 1:26, 28 Jerusalem Bible) or they have dominion over the earth (Revised Standard Version). Now, the church in Hong Kong must actively involve assisting in the process of building up the Hong Kong people, their awareness of their intrinsic value as well as their role in society. The church must enable the respective governments to bring this to reality. It looks like both the Chinese and the British governments aim to maintain the status quo in Hong Kong at the pretext of maintaining and preserving its economic prosperity and social stability. The church, especially its leaders, must be less status conscious, and prepare to challenge both governments on this view. The church in Hong Kong must assume the role of a prophet and becomes a loyal opposition to the government authorities. But first within the church itself, it must create a genuine open and democratic atmosphere.

The Hong Kong Church is in constant touch with thousands of people of all age levels. It has 900 parishes or congregations, the same number of schools and social service centers. It is an ideal situation for building up the Hong Kong people and its leadership. The church in Hong Kong must prioritize its work. Instead of investing so heavily in providing social services, it should concentrate more on its pastoral functions. The church spends far too little on theological education. This must be corrected.

### **The Role of the International Community**

Hong Kong is not a British city. Neither should it be turned into a Chinese city. It is an international city. Its major function is to serve China and the rest of the world. Its survival depends on this. The international community therefore has as much responsibility as the Chinese and the British governments to maintain Hong Kong and let it remain an international and free city. One direct way is for the international community to increase its concern and participation in Hong Kong, not only in the official and business side, but also in other aspects like the increase of "people to people" contacts as well.

What can the ecumenical church do?

First, you can encourage your politicians to be interested in Hong Kong and be willing to speak on its behalf in their own government. Canada has a Hong Kong policy. U.S.A. has decided to attach Hong Kong's democracy and human rights with its China Policy.

Second, support all democratic efforts in Hong Kong, in prayer, human as well as financial resources. Leadership development is one crucial area overseas church organizations can help. You can also help the Christians in your part of the country to know a little bit more about Hong Kong.



I know your church or your organization has many concerns. Hong Kong is very low among in your priorities. (Hong Kong seldom is placed in the agenda of ecumenical meetings.) If you think Hong Kong is affluent enough so that it can take care of itself, then you are missing something. Hong Kong belongs to China as well as to the international community. It cannot survive without their support. If Hong Kong should go down, China as well as the international community will suffer. For together they will lose one of the most important servicing centres in the world.

Too many overseas churches and church organizations have argued that since they relate only to a denomination or the local council, they should only respond to the latter's requests. Unfortunately even at this crucial stage, you will only receive requests to assist the institutional church to maintain the status quo which at least in principle should hardly be a concern of any church. Instead, I would urge you to give your full support to all Christian democratic efforts.

One final note. In 1951, China signed an agreement with Tibet. Tibet was made an autonomous region of China. The 17 principles laid down in this agreement were somewhat similar to the Sino- British Joint Declaration. If China broke its promise to Tibet by stripping its culture, religion and heritage in the last 40 years, certainly this is a legitimate basis for the Hong Kong people to be afraid. Prevention is better than cure. We must all try to prevent whatever happened in Tibet happening later in Hong Kong. The Tibetan tragedy has also hurt China, for China becomes poorer in ruining the Tibetan culture and their people's rights and meaningful existence. Few countries knew what went on in Tibet in the 1950's. The few who knew decided to keep silent. Let us make sure that this kind of historical mishap will not repeat itself, not in Hong Kong, nor elsewhere in the world.



## 9

### *Democracy in Hong Kong*

#### **Introduction**

Democracy is in its infantile stage in Hong Kong. Since democracy concerns people, their inherent rights and responsibilities, it has got to be developed according to the wishes and strides of the people. In this way, democracy in Hong Kong is democracy which fits Hong Kong. There is no question whatsoever that democracy in Hong Kong is western imported or even Asian in style and substance. In this paper, I wish to highlight some of the vital ingredients in the democratic developments in Hong Kong.

#### **People's Livelihood Enhanced**

In recent months, there were a few reports in England saying that the present Hong Kong Governor is too soft on China and several British business tycoons are lobbying the British government to put a stronger man out here in Hong Kong. (Surprisingly, neither the foreign office nor John Major, during his September visit to Hong Kong, shed any light on this wide-spread rumor.) This shows very tellingly that the Hong Kong governor, traditionally viewed as an almighty person in Hong Kong is only true on paper. He is subject to the influence and pressure exerted by big businesses. This was not only true in the United Kingdom but in Hong Kong as well.

Generally, it's an accepted fact in Hong Kong that several British business firms (like Hong Kong Bank, Jardine, Swire, etc.), from then until now, and several Chinese families (like Li Ka Shing, Kwok Tak Shing, Pao Yue Kong, etc.) influence the Hong Kong governor and his handful of hand-picked advisors in all their deliberations. As a matter of fact, they control, and in some instances monopolize, Hong Kong's vital facets of life such as housing and utilities, transportation and retail business. And now they are about to move to the electronic media (e.g. Sir Y.K. Pao's family controls Worldwide Shipping, Kowloon Wharf Property, Hong Kong Tramway, Star Ferry, Marco Polo Hotels, Hong Kong Cross Harbour Tunnel, Hong Kong Container Port, Wheelock Marden Trading Firm, Lane Crawford; Li Ka Shing family controls Cheung Kong Property, Hong Kong Electric, Park and Shop, Hutchinson Whampoa Trading Firm). These "monopolies" by and large are checked loosely. The government does little to curb their incessant price hikes. Recent opinion polls conducted by South China Morning Post (SCMP) and Ming Pao, two leading newspapers in Hong Kong, showed that the unbelievable price for residential flats (\$2,500 to \$3,000 per square foot on the average) and the inflation rate (13.9% in April) are the two things most Hong Kong citizens are worried about.

On the whole, the Hong Kong government does not have a social vision, and it lacks courage to deal with the problems greatly affecting the livelihood of the masses. Instead of increasing the corporate tax or the profits tax (now at a maximum of 16% and 15% respectively) by half a per cent to balance its budget (for this will make the business community extremely annoyed), invariably year after year, it has been increasing the indirect tax and in a phenomenal percentage (e.g. cigarette tax was increased by 200% in March, due to an uproar from practically all sectors, it was lowered to 100%). This certainly adds much fuel to the inflation problem.

The Hong Kong government tends to listen to the business community more. It believes that the business community is the major stabilizing force. (Of course we all know that there are at

least 200 business firms, lead by Jardine whose registered offices have been moved away from Hong Kong since March 1984. What kind of commitment is this to Hong Kong!) So when the big businesses said democracy would drive away overseas investors, the pace of democracy was slowed down. When they did not want to pay 5% more, up to this day, the provident fund is still not compulsory in Hong Kong's factories and companies.

As 1997 approaches, Hong Kong government becomes even less caring especially to the weak and the young. For so many years, social services were provided to the wider community at a nominal charge. But now Hong Kong government wants to recover a substantial part of the cost in providing these services.

The first ever direct election held on September 15, 1991 sent a very clear message to the business community and the government. Hong Kong people are tired of being treated as the marginalized. They do not want to be pushed around all the time. They want change. That is why all the seven candidates supported by the business sector lost miserably. Three of them did not even get 5% of the total votes and as a result their deposit was forfeited. That explains also why 15 "democrats" (all have a record of fighting many years for more democracy in Hong Kong) and one famous former journalist who has been critical of the establishment were elected by big margins. (The other two elected are independent, one represents the rural interests and the other an academic).

There is an interesting anecdote when we look at the election of the professional groups. (The Hong Kong legislature in 1991-1994 consists of: 18 directly elected members; 21 indirectly elected members representing the professional groups called functional constituencies; 18 appointed by the Governor, one serving as the Vice-President; three most senior officials in the civil service and the Governor himself serving as the President.) There were two candidates in the General Chamber of Commerce Grouping. The one supported by big businesses lost to the one who has been outspoken and supported a faster pace of democratic develop-

ments in Hong Kong. Can we then say that even the small business people are sick and tired of being marginalized by the big business cum government?

The people of Hong Kong do not bother to define what is democracy. They want a better livelihood. They want the quality of their life improved. There was no significant improvement of the past couple of years because increase in salary could not off-set the very high rate of inflation. Furthermore, they realize they must fight for it. They want their government to take their grievances and address their needs seriously. To them this is democracy.

### **People's Basic Rights Respected**

Men and women on the street will tell you that what they are most afraid of is to lose their personal freedom. According to a survey done by SCMP on June 30, 1991, exactly six years when the sovereignty of Hong Kong goes back to China, 59% of the people said they believe they will enjoy less freedom after 1997. Perhaps this is the major factor causing the mass emigration problem in Hong Kong in recent years. According to the government, the net outflow of Hong Kong citizens amounted to 60,000 in 1989 and 62,000 in 1990. It also projected that by 1996, the figure will stand at 426,000.

Hong Kong people have sufficient grounds to be afraid of the communist regime. After all about 45% of its citizens fled from China. Many of them have had first-hand experiences about the poor human rights record of the party, from the top leaders down to the cadre on the street level. Of course, the Beijing massacre on June 4, 1989 dealt a very severe blow to the rest of Hong Kong's population. People in Hong Kong are not only afraid of the communist regime, many have started to behave according to what the regime likes and dislikes (obviously, for fear of reprisal) or "the settling of accounts" after 1997. According to a study done by the Chinese University on the mass media, more than 50% of the journalists said they would give due consideration to what the

Chinese authorities think of their reporting. About 25% said that they have adopted a measure of "self-censorship".

Neither do the Hong Kong people think highly of the British government. Most believe that all the British government cares about is to maintain an amiable Sino-British relationship. They believe that the British government is obsessed with its trade with China and its many other interests. It never lives up to its constitutional as well as moral responsibilities in protecting the basic human rights, dignity and well-being of the 5.7 million Hong Kong people. In fact, it denies the Hong Kong citizens of the many important basic rights based on international standards.

The United Kingdom became a signatory to both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 1976. Article I of both states that "all people have the right to self-determination". But during the Sino-British negotiations regarding the future of Hong Kong, Hong Kong citizens were never given any opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings.

The ICCPR stipulated that every citizen has the right to "nationality". For fearing that hundreds and thousands of Hong Kong citizens fled to the United Kingdom, the British government in the 1981 Nationality Act and the 1986 Hong Kong British Nationality Order has denied all British citizens born in Hong Kong (the total number is about 3.25 million) not only the right of entry and abode in the United Kingdom, but also the "right to a nationality". Strictly speaking, between 1986 and 1997 these 3.25 million people are deprived of any nationality status.

Yes, after June 4, the Hong Kong government was eager to boost the confidence of Hong Kong people by drafting a Bill of Rights. But in careful analysis, its scope is narrow and below international standards. Neither does it have the supremacy status nor is it entrenched in the legal system in Hong Kong. And China has already threatened to amend or repeal it after 1997.

Hong Kong people despise the British government. That explains why few chose to emigrate to the United Kingdom. And why after June 4 when the British government offered 50,000 full British passports to Hong Kong citizens, the applications were disappointingly low. Hong Kong people have not given up their hope on China. Hong Kong Chinese are patriotic. They want to contribute to China's reforms and ambitious modernizations programs. But at the same time, they want China to honor its promises to Hong Kong people, namely: (a) the mainland system and way of life not be introduced in Hong Kong; (b) the post-1997 Hong Kong government has high autonomy (with the exception of defense and foreign affairs); and, (c) Hong Kong people, not Beijing directed people, will govern Hong Kong. These promises welcomed by Hong Kong people have been enshrined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration regarding the future of Hong Kong signed and tabled at the United Nations in 1984.

Hong Kong people take the Joint Declaration very seriously because the implementation of it in full gives the only hope for the future of Hong Kong. Hong Kong people do not want China to interfere. Again the recent election results was such a vindication.

In the September 15 Legislative Council election, China directly or indirectly backed three candidates. The organization of their campaign was superb and two of the candidates were strong candidates. But they all lost. Of the 18 which got elected, 15 have a record of being "confrontational" to the Chinese authorities. Furthermore, the three who got the highest votes city-wide have been branded as "anti-revolutionaries" by China.

The people in Hong Kong have spoken. They want to be masters of their own destinies. For them, democracy is synonymous with freedoms. They want a government which can and will safeguard their basic human rights and freedoms, especially security and freedom of a person, and the right to dissent.



## **People's Social Responsibilities Realized**

Despite the fact that we heard a fairly united voice in the first direct election in Hong Kong, the turn out was fairly low. 750,000 or 39.15% of the registered voters voted. Of the 3.8 million eligible voters only 1.9 million bothered to register as voters. One can say that Hong Kong people have Chinese blood. By tradition, Chinese are politically apathetic. They only mind their family affairs. Moreover, half of the people now living in Hong Kong feel that they are transient. Hong Kong is not their home. Many came as refugees. Thus, all they care about is to make money. No wonder Hong Kong people are labeled as "one dimensional" beings. They only try to do well in the economic arena of life and totally disregard the political and the cultural.

Of course, a few academics would argue that many Hong Kong people are extremely disappointed with the Hong Kong government as well as the "Qing", the "nationalist" and now the "communist" governments and would want to stay away from public affairs as much as possible. But in final analysis, it was the colonial government which made the people in Hong Kong apolitical. For in schools as well as at work, they were taught to be obedient, never raise questions, not to rock the boat, but to maintain the "status quo".

This "closed" system was seriously challenged by the extended riots in May to November 1967. The Hong Kong government realized that it had to open up. A rule by consultation system was derived. In the early 1980's the then home affairs secretary proudly stated that the government has eight different channels of consultations with its people, the most important at the time was the "District Boards" set up in full-scale in 1982 (referred to in the White Paper on District Administration in Hong Kong published in January 1981).

The Hong Kong government had wanted to further "liberalize" itself. Geoffrey Howe, the British Foreign Secretary during a press conference in April 1984 and the subsequent publication of



the White Paper on "The Further Development of Representative Government in Hong Kong" in November 1984, had promised direct elections in the legislature in 1988. But because of China's vehement objections, the British-Hong Kong Government backed out. It was later discovered that China had never wanted to give back the power to the Hong Kong people. Even during this transition period, China had always wanted to have dominion together with the British over Hong Kong. This was evidenced by the New Airport Agreement signed between Li Pang and John Major in early September 1991.

Reflecting on the basic ingredients of democracy in Hong Kong and other parts of the world, Genesis 1:26 and 28 provides a few solid clues. It says here that God commanded Adam and Eve (man and woman created in his own image) to "have dominion over... [his creation]" (Revised Standard Version) or to "be masters of ... [his creation]" (Jerusalem Bible). Ontologically, people are the masters; and missiologically, people have a responsibility to take care of God's creation including one another (Genesis 2:15 and Genesis 4). This implies that people are the "subject" of any society. The government is the servant. To be a human being is to assert some form of social responsibility, including meaningful participation in governmental affairs.

Hong Kong government should give back the power to the Hong Kong people. The Chinese as well as the British governments must give their full backing to this. So in this context, Hong Kong people should be allowed to go beyond the Basic Law of Hong Kong SAR promulgated in April 1990 (which denies Hong Kong people to elect their chief executive and which stipulates that Hong Kong's legislature in 1997 has only one-third directly elected seats). Hong Kong must have a fully democratic and representative government, the sooner the better. For only such a government, elected by its people will respond to their needs and their hopes, and will be supported by the people. From another angle, only such a government can induce people's fuller participation and contribution towards the future development of Hong Kong and indeed of China.

Hong Kong is now at a crossroads. Those concerned must get together to lift up the consciousness of all Hong Kong people. They need to think, to be more concerned and aware of their responsibility towards each other and the entire society; and be willing to discharge such social responsibility.

We have seen how the consciousness of the people in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union have turned into people's power and changed their closed society into an open society within a very short period of time. This should serve as a valuable example to Hong Kong people and the respective governments. The future of Hong Kong and of China is in the hands of the people!

## **Conclusion**

Democracy is not only about the people's rule. It is also about people's consciousness of their dignity and value as human beings, as well as their social responsibility. Furthermore, democracy is also about the promotion of people's basic rights and freedom and the protection of the same. Democracy engenders and at the time requires an open and free atmosphere in society. In this paper, I have tried to outline the form of democracy in Hong Kong. The struggle between the outgoing British-Hong Kong government and the incoming sovereign Chinese government will become more fierce in the remaining six years. This will also be true between the Hong Kong people and the respective governments. Undoubtedly, Hong Kong people will be used as pawns. In these struggle, Hong Kong needs the international community. By speaking out or even by confronting the government authorities, making sure that the arrangements for Hong Kong's future is both fair and just, you can act as a very valuable referee. By remembering the Hong Kong people in your prayers and through your words of encouragement, you can then become a friend in need to the Hong Kong people.

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### ***Hong Kong Faces 1997: Recolonization or Decolonization***

#### **The Kairos for Decolonization**

On December 19, 1984, Margaret Thatcher and Zhao Ziyang signed the Sino-British Joint Declaration regarding the future of Hong Kong on behalf of their respective governments. This signalled the end of the colonial rule and the beginning of a new era in Hong Kong. According to the Joint Declaration, Hong Kong will become a Special Administrative Region of the Peoples' Republic of China on July 1, 1997. Also in this agreement, China stated that it will not impose its socialist system and way of life on Hong Kong. Hong Kong will be given a highly autonomous status. With the exception of defence and foreign affairs, the central government in Beijing will not interfere.

Furthermore, Beijing will not send a government official (or officials) to govern Hong Kong. Instead, Hong Kong people will be given an opportunity for self-rule. Both the British Parliament and the Chinese People's Congress ratified the Joint Declaration in early May 1985. The transition period thus officially began. In theory, it marked the beginning of the decolonization process. Both sovereign governments as well as the Hong Kong government should spare no efforts to prepare Hong Kong people for this radical change.

## **The Dominant Negative Force**

One of the first steps in colonization is to progressively introduce a fully representative government in Hong Kong. "The earlier, the better," as argued so eloquently in his letter to this author in early 1987 by the former British Prime Minister Edward Heath.

Almost seven years have gone by, the legislature, not to mention the executive branch of the Hong Kong government, is still firmly controlled by the governor and his handful of senior civil servants. True, Hong Kong finally held the first-ever Legislative Council Direct Election on September 15, 1991. Sixteen of the eighteen contested seats were won by people like Martin Lee and Szeto Wah, with impeccable records of fighting for democracy in Hong Kong for years. But in the subsequent appointments of the other eighteen seats by the governor, no other similar personalities were appointed. This means the whole legislature for 1991-1995 (18 elected by universal franchise, 21 elected by professional groups and trade unions, 18 appointed plus 3 most senior civil servants) is still tipped heavily towards supporting the government. In order to counter the United Democrats who hold 14 seats in the Legislative Council, 21 pro-establishment councillors have formed the Cooperative Resource Center (a government party in substance, though not in name).

In other words, Hong Kong has less than six years before it becomes a Special Administrative Region of China. There are signs that the government itself is still in a standstill. It is still a very elitist government - ruled by a few and for a few.

One of the general marks of the colonial rule is that its government lacks social commitment. The provision of social services is placed in low priority. In recent years, we witnessed the privatization of important services such as housing and hospitals and cut back in welfare expenses. It has been decided also that citizens who use these services, social welfare included, will have to pay a percentage of their costs. This is a radical departure from the last century and a half. This implies tremendous financial burdens on

the low income. For example, now you only need to pay HK\$34 for a day of hospitalization. It's widely reported that the New Hospital Authority will require you to pay HK\$100 next year. This will go up to HK\$500 by 1995 the latest!

The existing government is less than committed to improve the livelihood of the masses of people. Inflation has been in double digit for a while. It reached an all time high of 13.9% this April. Instead of asking the wealthy to shoulder a fairer share of the problem, the government puts the blame on the rapid increase of wages. So, its major strategy to combat inflation - the No.1 enemy in Hong Kong nowadays - is to import a lot of laborers. To meet its ever growing expenditures, instead of a slight increase of corporate tax or profits tax (at maximum of 16% and 15% respectively), the government resorts to the increase of indirect taxes year after year. The quality of life for the low income families in Hong Kong has not shown any marked improvement, especially when they are compared to their counterparts in Taiwan, Korea or Singapore.

Regarding the safeguarding of human rights, yes, a Bill of Rights was enacted on June 5, 1991. But the government is implementing it half-heartedly. The government in effect took the lead to violate it in mid-July when it refused entry to 15 Chinese students holding valid visas who wanted to come for a conference in China at the invitation of the Federation of Hong Kong Students. Up to this date, the government has not set up a committee which it promised to promote the bill. Without a Human Rights Committee, the already watered-down bill will only be a well-decorated piece of legislation safely tucked away.

Instead of mustering the resources available to build up the people and the community in Hong Kong, in the remaining six years, the government decided to spend HK\$127 billion (1989 figures) for the Port and Airport Development Strategy (PADS).

In the final analysis, the Hong Kong government in its sun-down days remains quite colonial and archaic, greatly influenced

by the wealthy industrialists and business tycoons who in turn monopolize the important facets of the common people: housing, transportation, telecommunications, etc. It is this government cum business force which prevents the process of decolonization in Hong Kong.

### **The Threat of Recolonization**

In 1984, China promised to give Hong Kong a great deal. Even in foreign affairs, which will be the responsibility of the central government, trade matters are exempted. Hong Kong will be given an independent trade negotiation status. This indeed was evidenced just a month ago when the Chinese foreign secretary, Qian Qichen and Hong Kong's Trade & Industry Secretary, Brian Chau, sat side by side in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum held in Seoul. At that time, Chinese top leadership was most concerned about the territorial integrity of China and Hong Kong's usefulness to China as a service center. Throughout the 1980s, China earned between 31% to 37% of its foreign exchange from Hong Kong. Hong Kong was a main provider for China's ambitious modernization programs. So, China intuited that besides the British flag and garrison, Hong Kong can continue to remain as it is. At that time too, China had adopted unprecedented open policies since 1979.

As time moved on, China was to discover the meaning and implications of having Hong Kong to remain as a "free enterprise region". The eight elder statesmen were very afraid to lose control on Hong Kong, and eventually on China as well. (Hong Kong style and way of life are always very contagious to China!) As we witnessed in subsequent years, China wanted to tighten its control on Hong Kong. This explained why there was no direct election in the Hong Kong legislature in 1988. (British Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe had promised such in his press conference held in Hong Kong in April 1984; and so was Hong Kong government's "Policy Paper on the Further Development of a Representative Government" published in November 1984.) This explained why the Basic Law promulgated in April 1990 was so undemocratic. It



actually deviated in letter and spirit in many important places from the Joint Declaration. China wanted to interfere on Hong Kong's internal affairs became even more obvious when it wanted a say in the building of a new airport. The Airport Agreement signed by John Major and Li Peng in early September 1991 set a precedent on future mode of operation in Hong Kong. China's insistence on the constitution of a panel of judges in the Court of Final Appeal to be set up in 1993 (in place of the function of the Privy Council in London) also renders the independence of Hong Kong's judiciary after 1997 a hopeless case. All in all, these are the traces showing that the British rule is on its way out; and, the Beijing rule is on its way in. It means that British "decolonization" in Hong Kong is on the halt and "recolonization" by Beijing has already started.

We cannot put all the blame on the Chinese leaders. The British government is also at fault. Invariably, it kowtowed to the Chinese on its demands regarding arrangements for Hong Kong's future. It is an open secret that the British highly treasures the market in China. An amiable relationship with China is thus of paramount importance.

It has been said that all governments are dishonorable. In a way so are most of the traders. The British policy on China has been shaped by the influential business community in both Hong Kong and Britain. Though deep down in their hearts, these business people do not like and do not trust the communists, yet and at least superficially, they want to accommodate the wishes of the communist regime in China. In return, the supreme leader in China, Deng XiaoPing, had this to say, "Investors, put your hearts at rest," meaning China will take care of their interests if they behave.

### **The Dilemma of the Hong Kong People**

When the Joint Declaration was initialled in September 1984, 81% of Hong Kong people said they could accept it. (Both governments had told them there was no other alternative.) 98% of Hong Kong people are Chinese. On the whole, they are patriotic

(as evidenced by the two billion dollars they raised to help the flood victims in Eastern China in July). They welcome the idea of having Hong Kong to be reuniting with their motherland.

Conceptually, few people want to be "colonial subjects". The British government always treated Hong Kong people as second class citizens. Of the 8 million people now living in British colonies, only the 3.25 million born in Hong Kong are denied full British citizenship. Britain has ruled Hong Kong for 150 years. It has not undertaken any significant political reforms until this year. When it negotiated a future for Hong Kong with China, Hong Kong people were not consulted. As a signatory to the International Covenant on Civic & Political Rights, Britain's policies on Hong Kong are both morally and constitutionally indefensible.

Hong Kong people were led to believe that the Joint Declaration gave Hong Kong an "independent government" within China. But soon after the fall of 1985, Hong Kong people became very disillusioned. They came to know China has a very different interpretation and understanding of the Joint Declaration. China has no intention to leave Hong Kong alone. It would interfere with Hong Kong affairs at its whim.

The never-ending signals it sent to Hong Kong, in terms of warning and threats, reminded Hong Kong people once again of the fearful tactics of a totalitarian state. After all, 45% of Hong Kong people had fled China since 1949. Of course, the violent crackdown on the democratic movement in June 1989 dealt the most severe blow to Hong Kong.

For those who have the money and skills, they emigrated - 60,000 in 1989 and 62,000 in 1990. The Hong Kong government predicted that about half-a-million would be gone by 1996. For the five million who cannot leave, they have been suffering from a morale failure. The "everybody for himself or herself" attitude is predominant. Hong Kong is run just like a big corporation. It requires many more experienced managers and professionals it

can produce by its institutions of higher learning. The brain drain is hurting Hong Kong immensely.

Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore had given the Hong Kong people a bit of advice, "Do not confront China." Since then, the Chinese authorities, several most senior British officials, countless business tycoons, and lately even the Hong Kong governor have all picked up this tone. In a recent survey, half of the journalists said they would give due consideration on China's feelings in their reporting. This kind of self-censorship is extremely harmful to Hong Kong as a free international city.

But the fact is, it is certainly legitimate for Hong Kong citizens to speak up on what they think is best for them - for Hong Kong is their home. The results of the first-ever direct election in the legislature indicated the Hong Kong people are not neutral. All Beijing or Hong Kong business community supported candidates lost. The pro-democracy candidates enjoyed a landslide victory.

Increasingly, more and more community workers and young professionals have expressed their commitment to Hong Kong and their willingness to fight for a better Hong Kong. They deserve all the encouragement and support we can muster.

## **The Emerging Catalytic Forces**

In theory, the church, being an uninterested party, could have played a vital role in the people's struggle to be free. But this has not been the case with the church in Hong Kong.

Ever since its beginning, because of the historical church-state relationship in England, the church in Hong Kong (especially the Anglican and the Roman Catholic church) always enjoys immense privileges and influence. Traditional churches are a part of the establishment. The score of the most famous church high schools produce elitists in their thousands who in turn help to uphold the colonial set-up.

Because of the acute need for relief, welfare and later, school places in the 1950s and 1960s, the mainline churches have seized the opportunity to build up a huge service empire. The evangelical churches meanwhile concentrated their efforts in church growth especially planting new congregations in new towns. In both counts, the church in Hong Kong rely heavily on financial contributions, earlier on dozens of overseas missionary societies and later, the local government and wealthy business people. This dependency syndrome has literally crippled the "prophetic role" of the church in Hong Kong. Since the late 1980s, there were plenty of cases showing the institutional church leaders tried to suppress individual critics within the church.

The main enabling force of "decolonization" or "democratization" came from the social activities in the 1970s. They have contributed much in promoting Hong Kong as a more open society. Now, the leading figures have been elected to the Legislative Council. Fourteen of them are members of the United Democrats of Hong Kong (UDHK) - the first political party in Hong Kong. With their presence in the Legislative Council, the government will be forced to be more accountable to the people of Hong Kong especially in the areas of the improvement of the livelihood of the masses and the safeguarding of their basic human rights. The UDHK will continue to fight for a fully democratic and representative legislature, and a more responsible executive.

The UDHK and the many other small political groups will remain an important force for Hong Kong's political, social as well as economic development. But with very limited resources, they will confine their work in "advocacy". Research and education are the two crucial tasks other concerned groups need to take up. Realizing these urgent and unmet needs, 120 leading Christians in Hong Kong founded Hong Kong Christian Institute in September 1988. With a high calibre staff of six and a dedicated string of volunteer theologians, pastors and professionals. HKCI engages in research, education and publication. We concentrate on the following four areas:

- a. To forge a practical social vision in Hong Kong. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Hong Kong lacks overall direction. Most people live by an utmost self-centered quasi-like philosophy. Education (expanding rapidly, by 1995 Hong Kong will have 11 years of compulsory education; and the degree students take doubled) serves no purpose other than to help our youngsters to climb the social ladder. A sociologist predicted because of the added 1997 impact, Hong Kong society may be disintegrated before the end of this century.
- b. A democratic culture is essential. This should include at least a fully democratic and representative government; an open and free social atmosphere as well as a sense of belonging and responsibility among all citizens. Democratic conscientization is absolutely essential.
- c. The church should once again act as a social conscience. But first it needs to refocus its directions and assumes a servanthood as well as prophetic roles towards the entire society. Its life, like worship and evangelism, needs to be completely overhauled.
- d. Radical reeducation needs to take place in all congregations. Christians need to be encouraged especially to think and to put their faith into practice.

## **The International Support**

Strictly in economic terms, Hong Kong is vital to China. China depends heavily on Hong Kong's technological transfer and capital input. Increasingly, Hong Kong has also become a key player in the economic growth in the Pacific-Rim which in turn is crucial to Asia.

Many purport that Hong Kong people have pulled off an economic miracle in just forty years. Now, it is one of the world's most important trading centers. The per capital income of Hong

Kong is one of the highest in Asia, only lower than Japan and Brunei. Certainly Hong Kong is far from a capitalist paradise, yet in many ways, it can serve as a model of development for Asia.

Furthermore, there are many countries in Asia which are multi-cultural, multi-racial and even with groups of people who had traversed in different paths: economically, politically and socially. But they have to find a way to coexist preferably on just terms, so that at least the rights and freedom of the minority group or groups will be safeguarded. Can the China-Hong Kong experiment, "One Country, Two Systems", be such a model of coexistence?

In sum, the continuing development of Hong Kong is an important stimulus to China, to Asia and indeed the rest of the world. It therefore deserves all the support the international community can give.

There are countries like the U.S.A. which are attempting to legislate a Hong Kong policy in relationship to democracy and human rights. The former French Premier Jacques Chirac has proposed that the United Nations should monitor on Hong Kong's development. After all, the Sino-British Joint Declaration was registered at the United Nations in December 1984. This international treaty will last for fifty years until 2047. The United Nations, certainly, has a responsibility to oversee the implementation of the treaty in full. All these suggestions are very helpful.

But in the final analysis, the quest for freedom and democracy lies in the struggle of the people. This is evidently so with the radical changes in Russia and in East Europe. Hong Kong people need to be empowered. As Asians, you are emphatic on this Hong Kong struggle. You can support the Hong Kong people by explicitly expressing your solidarity with them.



## ***Protestant Churches in Hong Kong: A Situation Report***

### **Introduction**

In every age, the Church of Jesus Christ struggles to be faithful to God in that it tries to respond to the situations where it believes God is acting.

This will then be a personal interpretation of the story of the churches in Hong Kong over the past one-and-a-half centuries. And it will confine itself to a history of those Christian churches with a non-Roman Catholic background. Our subject can be divided into four eras: The First One Hundred Years, (1842- 1942); period of Expansion (1942-1962); The Great Social Involvement (1962-1982); and, the Quest for a Future (1982-2002).

### **The First One Hundred Years (1842-1942)**

Hong Kong did not begin with the arrival of the British in 1842. It had been the home of Chinese fishermen and their families for centuries. However, it became important and known to the world only after it was turned into a British Crown colony.

Back in the 19th Century, when Western imperialism reached its zenith, many Western imperialists took an interest in China which, even in those days, was the most populous country in the world. But owing to the closed door policy of this self-contained

and self-sufficient middle kingdom, the rapacious, aggressive western powers turned to military might to force open China's doors. Wars were fought, Chinese ports were forced to open, and vast areas of Chinese territory were ceded in perpetuity or leased out to foreign powers.

Britain defeated China in the infamous Opium Wars of the 1840's and 1850's. By the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842, Hong Kong Island was ceded to Britain in perpetuity. By the Treaty of Peking in 1860, Kowloon (south of Boundary Street) and Stonecutter Island were ceded to Britain permanently. Then finally, in 1898 in Beijing, the New Territories and about 100 islands (comprising 92% of the total land mass of present-day Hong Kong) were leased to Britain for 99 years.

Trade and the western church arrived in Hong Kong together, following the establishment of a British colonial government which provided the territory with a rather efficient structure, especially in terms of law and order. The enormous trade between China and the West made Hong Kong an increasingly important entrepot. Hong Kong has one of the world's finest natural harbors. The church, with the support of the government and hence, with the trust of the community, helped to provide essential social services especially medical and health, educational and welfare services. Through the years, the church also helped to train a great many young people who eventually became community and government leaders through such schools as Ying Wa College and Ying Wa Girls School (established by the London Missionary Society), and the Diocesan Boys' School and Diocesan Girls' School (established by the Church Missionary Society together with the Anglican Church in Hong Kong).

If most of the western traders and businessmen used Hong Kong as a stepping stone to China, this could also be said of most of the missionary boards as well. Because of this situation, Hong Kong, from its earliest days as a colony, flourished as a bridgehead to mainland China.

Church growth in Hong Kong during the initial period was extremely slow. Local Chinese churches were mostly concerned with pastoral work within their own congregations. Mass evangelistic meetings were common. Missionary societies from abroad provided social services. The Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole hospitals were founded at this time, as were the aforementioned institutions of learning.

The Chinese Christian community in the prewar years had always been very closely knit. Preachers moved back and forth, exchanging pulpits, crossing sectarian boundaries all the time. Because of the need to coordinate the operations of the two Christian cemeteries and the home for the aged, the Chinese Christian Church's Union was established in the 1915. The Union only accepted Chinese local congregations for membership.

### **The Great Expansion (1942 - 1962)**

The pace of life in Hong Kong was very slow in the prewar years. But after the Second World War, because of a very sudden influx of people from the mainland, government and church activities mushroomed.

Reconstruction after the Japanese occupation (which lasted for three years and 8 months, from December 1941 to August 1945) had not been easy. Immediately after the war, there were fierce internal conflicts on the mainland which eventually resulted in the seizure of political control by the Communist Party. Then came the Korean War, during which the United States declared an embargo on China and Korea. This greatly affected Hong Kong which depended heavily on international trade, especially trade between the United States and China, for survival.

Many experts at the time thought the influx of refugees from the mainland would surely destroy Hong Kong. At the end of World War II Hong Kong had about 600,000 residents. The 1961 census showed that Hong Kong then had a population of 3,129,648. But Hong Kong people themselves proved the experts

wrong. They showed a remarkable capacity to adjust to any kind of situation and were ready to use their own blood and sweat to keep Hong Kong alive and prosperous.

Of course, Hong Kong was fortunate at the time in that the massive influx of refugees provided it with a very important and much needed labor force, and the inflow of capital and skills in the textile industry, especially from Shanghai, also made a very significant contribution towards economic progress. These two factors turned Hong Kong literally overnight from an entrepot to an important industrial center. Later, the plastic and the electronic industries were introduced and were soon flourishing.

Much of the work of the light industries was done in the homes or in very small factories. Shipbuilding, which included repairing and salvaging, was the only heavy industry then present in Hong Kong. But the sudden increase of population demanded massive construction of housing and other public facilities such as roads and highways, often on land reclaimed from the sea. And this led to the rapid development of the construction industry which provided much needed employment for thousands of people.

How did the churches in Hong Kong fare during this period?

First of all, we saw an overall and significant increase in the number of Christians. Motives were mixed: some joined as "rice Christians". They came to the church for material reasons. Others were Christians who had fled from the mainland. They belonged mostly to the middle class. And still others joined the church because they sought much needed spiritual comfort.

Secondly, in the early 1950's a great many experienced missionaries arrived in Hong Kong with the financial backing of their mission boards. These financial resources were very much needed to supplement government efforts to cope with the acute refugee situation. Local churches also played a key role in providing relief and welfare to thousands of refugees. Most of the social

welfare agencies were founded during this period either by or with the support of overseas missionary societies.

Thirdly, the period was marked by advances in church unity. The Hong Kong Christian Welfare and Relief Council was founded for the purpose of coordinating the many and diverse Christian relief efforts. The Audio-Visual Evangelism Committee was established to support churches in their evangelistic efforts. But the most important of all was the founding of the Hong Kong Christian Council in 1954. The Council not only provided a forum for the churches but it was also instrumental in promoting the idea of "Joint Action for Mission" among the mainline churches. The Council also sponsored yearly ecumenical gatherings: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, World Day of Prayer, and World-wide Communion Sunday.

### **The Great Social Involvement (1962-1982)**

Hong Kong developed during this period by leaps and bounds. Lacking in land and other material resources, it was rich in human resources. There were other factors contributing to Hong Kong's success: China as a major supplier of food and water, the government's rule of law and its economic laissez-faire policies.

Hong Kong became, by Asian standards, an affluent society in the 1960's despite the fact that it had to fight against tough protectionist policies from all its major trade partners, such as the United States and the European Common Market. It had to face a series of world-wide economic recessions in the early 1970's. By the end of this period, Hong Kong became the third most important financial center in the world, and the third largest container port, and ranked 15th among the world's exporting nations (first in garment exports).

Hong Kong paid a dear price for its rapid economic development - the younger generation had been neglected. The 1967 riots forced the government, the community, as well as the church to

recognize that more attention must be given to the youth. Many youth centers and recreational facilities were set up by the churches. But the most important area of progress was in education. During this period the youth of Hong Kong began to enjoy nine years of free education compared to only 6 years in the previous period. The government was able to provide extra school placements only with the help of the churches.

Also during this period we witnessed the church, not satisfied with being merely a partner of government in providing social services, gradually assuming a new role as the conscience of the community.

The church was deeply shaken by the 1967 riots. Many ministers and lay leaders emigrated to other countries. Those who remained had to take a hard look at the relevance of what the church was doing. The impact of student and labor movements from the west also served as a catalyst. The church was forced to look outside itself, to pay more attention to larger community affairs.

Social involvement of the church underwent a major shift. As Hong Kong became more affluent, the primary need for immediate relief and welfare diminished. The church was thus able to redirect its resources to provide secondary services. Education, especially primary and secondary education, was one example. Another was in the area of social welfare. In order to meet the rapidly changing social and human needs, many innovative projects were introduced during these two decades. The social services became more professional, and Hong Kong can now consider many of them as meeting world standards.

During this time, the church also became more aware of the underlying realities that in order to solve social as well as personal problems, it must tackle the structural underpinning that were causing these problems. The church thus found itself more involved in social change. Through the establishment of pressure groups like the Christian Industrial Committee, the church not



only advocated more adequate legislation to protect the poor and called for more fundamental structural changes in society, but it also acted as an educational force among ordinary Christians in the pews to promote social justice.

Radical shifts within the church combined with the strong influence of secularism to bring about a drop in converts. Among the mainline churches, growth in terms of numbers was small. However, at the same time, the more evangelical churches experienced a marked increase in membership. The establishment of many para-church organizations also furthered grew in evangelical churches.

The end of this period saw a blurring of the sharp lines which had traditionally distinguished mainline from evangelical churches. While the mainline churches began to realize the importance of seeking an inner renewal of their spirituality, the evangelical began to get more and more involved outwardly in social concerns. (I feel certain that the Lausanne Conference of 1974 provided a major input in bringing about this shift in attitude and emphasis among our local evangelical churches).

Another feature of this period was the gradual withdrawal from Hong Kong of overseas missionary societies. Most of their work was handed over to local churches or to the Hong Kong Christian Council.

The ecumenical movement in Hong Kong turned a new chapter as churches with different backgrounds learned more about working together for common causes. The United Christian Hospital and the Community Health Project in Kwun Tong (an industrial satellite town) were two good examples.

Two major city-wide consultations were organized by the Hong Kong Christian Council during the period. The Consultation on the Mission of the Church in Hong Kong for the 1970's was especially symbolic. Opened by the governor, it dealt basically

with internal issues, such as Christian education, formation of new congregations, social concerns, etc.

The Consultation on the Mission of the Church in Hong Kong for the 1980's was also very fruitful. In attendance were all the church leaders within the Hong Kong Christian Council, representatives from several evangelical churches, as well as representatives from the Roman Catholic church. This consultation was quite outward-looking. The world set the agenda, so to speak. The consultation declared clearly that the five major mission concerns for the church in the next decade were: (1) evangelization of the lower-income people; (2) church participation in public policy making; (3) concern for the church in the China mainland; (4) ministry to students; and, (5) concern for social values.

The consultation brought about two immediate remarkable results: first, the establishment of a public policy commission; and second, the reestablishment of a relationship with the church in mainland China. There had been no meaningful relationships between the churches in China and those outside since 1954 when the church in China became, in name, the Three-Self Movement Church.

Relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Hong Kong Christian Council began to develop in 1970. An Ecumenical Joint Committee on Development (mainly concerned with developmental issues in Hong Kong) was formed. Activities during the week of Prayer for Christian Unity were often jointly organized. Many special Sundays (like Christian Communications Sunday, Education Sunday, Sea Sunday, Unity Sunday, etc.) were promoted jointly.

### **Quest for a Future (1982 - 2002)**

If we say that Hong Kong underwent an economic revolution in 1942-1962, and a social revolution in 1962-1982, then we can also say that Hong Kong has entered a period of political revolution as it now confronts the 1997 issue.

In 1972, when the People's Republic of China was admitted to the United Nations, it made its position very clear regarding the future status of Hong Kong. In 1979 when the Governor of Hong Kong visited China, Deng Xiaoping told him that China planned to restore Chinese sovereignty over the whole of Hong Kong not later than 1997. The Governor on his return did not reveal this to the Hong Kong people. He only reported that Mr. Deng had told him that the Hong Kong people should "put their hearts at ease" regarding the future of Hong Kong.

Obviously at the request of the foreign office, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, the British Prime Minister, then went to Beijing to discuss a negotiated settlement regarding Hong Kong's future. After her visit, it took 10 months for the British to realize finally that their government had no choice but to return Hong Kong's sovereignty to China. Formal negotiations began in July of 1983. It took the two teams representing the Chinese and the British governments 22 rounds of formal talks and 14 months to come up with an agreement. There were also during this period, many informal talks between the two heads of the negotiating teams. A drafting group was formed during the last weeks of negotiation. Geoffrey Howe, the British Foreign Secretary, also visited Beijing for talks in April and July of 1984.

The draft agreement between the two governments on the future of Hong Kong was initialed in Beijing on September 26, 1984. The draft agreement consisted of a Joint Declaration, three annexes: the first is an elaboration of the Chinese government's basic policies regarding Hong Kong; the second concerns the Sino- British Joint Liaison Group; and the third is on land leases and an exchange of memoranda about nationality and citizenship.

According to the draft agreement, the future of Hong Kong after 1997 will be as follows:

*On July 1, 1997 China will resume sovereignty over Hong Kong. Hong Kong will then become a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China with a high degree of autonomy except for foreign affairs and defense. Hong Kong will elect its own*

*legislature. The executive authorities (selected by elections or through consultations) shall be accountable to the legislature. Under the policy of "One Country, Two Systems", Hong Kong will be allowed to maintain its existing economic, social and judicial systems for 50 years. The people of Hong Kong will continue to enjoy their present lifestyles and freedoms.*

In view of this imminent political change, what has been the response of the church in Hong Kong?

First, in the spring of 1984, some evangelical Christian leaders issued an "evangelical declaration" which was a 10-point affirmation regarding the Christian faith in times of radical social change. It was very widely circulated and many Christian groups made a careful study of it.

Following the declaration, in the summer, came the "Manifesto on Religious Freedom". In my opinion, this is one of the most important documents in the history of the church in Hong Kong.

Earlier this year, the Hong Kong Christian Council felt that there was a need to communicate to the Chinese authorities what the churches in Hong Kong are doing. The Manifesto, therefore, was not a demand, but rather a comprehensive description of the state of the church in Hong Kong. It is called a manifesto because in its introductory section, the document declares that "religious freedom must be based on human rights which God bestows on all people, and that therefore, it is the responsibility of all governments to protect religious freedom"; and, in the concluding section, the document expressed the desire of the church in Hong Kong to rededicate itself to stand with the people of Hong Kong in working for a better future.

This manifesto endorsed by most of the Protestant denominations (almost 200 Local congregations and many church agencies) and sent to Beijing via the Hong Kong Branch of the New China News Agency, was published on August 31, 1984.

On 6th September, 21 church leaders, including heads of denominations, Christian agencies as well as local church pastors, went to Beijing to meet with the Chinese authorities. Again, the group did not go with the intention of making any demands on the Chinese authorities. We went to exchange ideas and to express our views about the future of Hong Kong - what needed to be maintained and what needed to be changed. We had already submitted a position paper to the Hong Kong and Macau Office of the State Council. At the same time, we wanted to hear what the Chinese leadership was thinking regarding "religious freedom". Our meeting with the Religious Affairs Bureau of the State Council was a long one. We tried to explain to them what the church in Hong Kong are doing. We were on the listening side when we met with the Director of the Hong Kong and Macau Office. According to Mr. Ji Pengfei, the Hong Kong church can continue to provide services for the community; China will not set up a Religious Affairs Bureau Office in Hong Kong and churches in Hong Kong will not be subordinate to the Three Self-Church in China.

The next twenty years are indeed going to be most crucial for Hong Kong. Whether Hong Kong will remain stable and prosperous will depend on the people of Hong Kong. I believe both the Chinese and British governments intend to make the arrangement for the future of Hong Kong work. After the signing of the Joint Declaration, many countries including the United States and Japan (the two most important trade partners of Hong Kong) have stated their support of such an agreement.

In view of this, what is the church in Hong Kong going to do? First of all, we should reexamine our own faith. If we say many people in Hong Kong have no confidence in the future of Hong Kong, how about the Christians? At this moment, the church should reaffirm that the God we believe in is the God who acts in history. God is in charge; the future is in His merciful hands. At the same time, we must remain faithful to His calling in our daily lives. He calls us to be His co-workers in His never ceasing creating-saving-sustaining activity in this world.

Secondly, the church in Hong Kong should engage in some serious rethinking of its current mindset and mission strategies. Most pastors and a great majority of our laity are still very inward looking. Christian faith and Christian living remain two different things. Local parishes are but buildings where people are drawn in for quasi-cultic and social activities. The notion of parish becomes utterly foreign where local parishes are completely cut-off from the community in which they are located.

I believe in the renewal of local parishes in Hong Kong. They must be rejuvenated in such a way that once again each congregation becomes a confessing, learning, participating, sharing, healing, reconciling, expecting and uniting fellowship, and its members nurtured in assuming a genuine Christ-like lifestyle.

For the last three decades, the church has made very significant social service contributions including higher education to the people of Hong Kong. Today Christian churches or agencies including the Roman Catholic church provide more than 40% of the kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, 50% of the social welfare agencies, and almost 20% of the hospital beds. As we face the 1997 issue, churches need to concentrate on the following tasks:

- a. Drafting the Basic Law. Now that we have a sound basic agreement, the next step is to translate it into the Basic Law that will govern the Hong Kong Special Administration Region after 1997. In order to forestall this process being dominated by powerful special interest groups or parties, the church must speak out for the voiceless in our society. This will insure that a balanced input will be given to the drafting committee.
- b. Democratization. Soon, Hong Kong people will be given an opportunity for governing themselves. According to the Hong Kong government's plan in the Green Paper in Representative Government, there will not be any direct elections to the Legislative Council, at least not before



1988. The church must pressure the government on this. The earlier the people are given opportunities to participate in the central government, the better chance Hong Kong will have to achieve a well-run local government by 1997.

Political education must be given to our young people. It does not have to take the form of additional subjects in schools. Hong Kong students already have to swallow an excessive dosage of academic courses. Rather it can become part of the school extra-curricular activities. Participation in student, school or community affairs, etc. must also be encouraged. The church-run schools and youth fellowships should take up this task immediately. Students also must be taught to distinguish between special interests and common good.

As part of its task to further democratic reforms, the church also needs to play an active role in voter registration, as well as to encourage potential leaders to run for local public offices, such as the District Boards and the Urban Council.

- c. Sinicization. In slightly more than a decade, Hong Kong will become part of China. We have to realize that our stability and prosperity will depend on the development of China. So it is high time that we begin thinking not only in terms of how to work for the betterment of Hong Kong, but also how we can contribute to China's modernization programs. 98% of the citizens in Hong Kong are Chinese. But it seems to me, most of them have already lost contact with their Chinese roots, so to speak. Hong Kong people look to the west more than to China in all areas of life. To help the Hong Kong Chinese rediscover and take pride in their cultural heritage is another urgent task. Young people in Hong Kong ought to have a better grasp of Chinese history including its contemporary history and the Chinese language. As the churches are already reaching out to so

many young people in Hong Kong through their schools as well as their youth groups, a great deal can be accomplished in these areas.

In order to carry out the above tasks, churches in Hong Kong must put aside their theological and ecclesiastical differences and join hands to face these common challenges together.

Today, there are more than 640 local Protestant congregations. Of these 124 are independent and the rest belong to 44 denominations. A great many of the Protestant churches in Hong Kong, whose total membership exceeds 220,000, are rich in human as well as material resources. However, most of them are more concerned with their internal affairs than with working for the well-being of the community at large. That the church exists for the world is far from being a reality among them.

Fortunately, more and more young Christians, despite the fact that they are disillusioned with their own local churches, are determined to respond to the paramount social needs and future demands in Hong Kong. This has become a formidable renewal force both within and without the church.

Increasingly, the Hong Kong Christian Council becomes a focus for social action. Concerned Christians are setting aside their denominational and theological differences and turning more and more to the Hong Kong Christian Council for leadership and support. And the Hong Kong Christian Council is determined to take on this important challenge, this unavoidable responsibility. At this critical moment of history, the Hong Kong Christian Council reaffirms its commitment to the people of Hong Kong and pledges to work for a more humane and just future for both Hong Kong and China.

## 12

### *The Church in Hong Kong, Before and After 1991*

#### **The Past**

Ever since its beginning in 1842, the church in Hong Kong has been the most influential voluntary organization in the territory. Its contributions in many areas have been well recognized and appreciated not only by the government, but by the general populace as well.

Before the Second World War (WW II) its work was heavily supported by many overseas missionary societies in personnel as well as finance. It ran several renowned hospitals. Of the 30 top high schools in Hong Kong, 27 were operated by the church. It was in providing high quality education that the church in Hong Kong helped to consolidate the "elitist system". Many senior civil servants, wealthy and influential business people and professionals as well as their family members received their basic education from these church-run elitist schools.

Soon after WW II, there came the influx of refugees from mainland China and the trade embargo soon afterwards. Together they caused extreme hardship on Hong Kong and almost stifled its further development. With the aid from more missionary societies forced out of China, the church in Hong Kong tried its best to provide relief and welfare to the thousands in dire need.

Since the 1960's with the financial backing from the government and private foundations (supported and controlled by the wealthy) the church stepped up its efforts in building more and more schools, hospitals as well as all kinds of social service centers and through these centers many innovative services were introduced to meet the ever-increasing human as well as social needs. To date, the church in Hong Kong (both Roman Catholic and Protestant) provides about 20% of the hospital beds, more than 40% of the kindergarten, primary as well as secondary school places as well as 60% of the social welfare work to the wider community. The total Christian population is about 8%, 270,000 Roman Catholic and 240,000 Protestants. Because of the church's efforts, Hong Kong is able to have nine years of compulsory education since 1978; and hopefully increasing to eleven years by 1993.

During this period, we have seen the Hong Kong church's great desire to become indigenous if not through theology and the Christian way of life, at least through finance and management. Instead of relying on overseas missionary societies, it relied more and more on government as well as the rich; at least the government and the rich have considered the church as a staunch partner. Together they formed an "unholy alliance", as said Emily Lau, a famous social critic.

The evangelical churches did much less in providing social services to the community. Rather, they concentrated on mass as well as individual evangelism; planting new congregations in new towns as well as sending and supporting missionaries to other parts of the world - not just the third world, but Europe and North America included. The church growth brought the development of a powerful but conservative middle class. A lot of similarities with the Christian moral majority in the U.S.A.

Overall the church in Hong Kong has a dependency syndrome, first to overseas churches, then to the "establishment" in Hong Kong. This dependency syndrome certainly is detrimental to the prophetic role of the church. As a matter of fact, we have

witnessed the "institutional church" (denominations and congregations) as anti-prophetic. It discouraged, and at times suppressed, its clergy and laity from getting involved in social issues because oftentimes they are controversial. For these church leaders, to be socially or politically involved is synonymous with destroying Hong Kong's stability and prosperity. As the institutional church itself is benefited from the "status quo", without any hesitation, it joins the whole establishment in condemning any challenges to it.

## **The Present**

On the whole, the church in Hong Kong has become quite irrelevant in evolving social changes, especially since the mid-1980's. It got itself heavily involved in providing social services and in engaging in church growth. It has become part of the establishment. It is no longer able to function apart from the establishment. In fact, to be the church serving the world, it needs to be both responsive to social needs and at the same time to refuse to conform to and being a part of the societal establishment. The institutionalized church in Hong Kong now does not have the vision nor the courage to get away from this doldrums.

Where there is no leadership, the people perish. In facing 1997 the church in Hong Kong is not immune to the overall morale failure city-wide, causing the emigration problem much worse within the church. City-wide, about one in twelve are predicted to leave by 1996. But within the church, it may be as high as one in six and from one source, even higher among pastors at one in four.

However, there are individual pastors and congregations struggling hard to make the Christian life relevant to social change. There are also numerous Christian groups (in one count, 27 altogether) which over the years have made great efforts to respond to crucial social issues, such as democratization in Hong Kong, the drafting of the Basic Law, measures to enhance the livelihood and to safeguard basic human rights of the masses. This important

Christian witness does not only give significant input to public policies but serves as a very much needed sign of hope to the wider community.

## **The Future**

Many are concerned whether there will be religious freedom in Hong Kong after 1997.

Well, religious freedom is guaranteed in the Basic Law (Article 32). Furthermore, church activities as outlined in Article 141 are allowed to continue. Whether the scope is broad enough (e.g. whether the church can enjoy the right of dissent to the government authorities), is of course subject to debate.

Other than the scope of religious freedom, the Hong Kong and Macau Office as well as the Religious Affairs Bureau of the State Council took pains to assure the Hong Kong delegation of church leaders in September 1984 that after 1997, the Religious Affairs Bureau would not set up office in Hong Kong and that the church in China and the church in Hong Kong will not subordinate to one another.

In a way, it is incorrect for the Christians in Hong Kong to be only concerned with religious freedom after 1997. We have to look at the issue from a much broader perspective. First, religious freedom is a basic human right. If in general, human rights are not respected in a region, its people will be deprived also of religious freedom. Second, a fully democratic and representative government is much more likely to respect and safeguard the people's basic human rights. Third, in the Hong Kong context, only when China is willing to fully implement the joint declaration, namely, the policies of "One Country, Two Systems", "the future SAR government is highly autonomous", and "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong", can Hong Kong and its church stand a fair chance of meaningful development.



What's worrisome is that since the signing of the Joint Declaration, there have been signs showing that the Joint Declaration is in deep trouble. The Basic Law does not adhere to it. China, afraid of losing control over Hong Kong, objected to the direct elections in Hong Kong. After the June 4 related events, China wanted to step up its control over Hong Kong (as evidenced by the Airport Agreement concluded June 30, 1991). The church in Hong Kong must be courageous enough to address and respond to these very crucial issues. Fewer and fewer people in Hong Kong want and perhaps dare to speak up and tell the truth.

The future of Hong Kong and indeed of China are in the hands of its people. A democratic culture in Hong Kong is very much needed. Besides fighting for a more open and democratic system and way of life in Hong Kong, the church must also promote democratic education in full steam, whereby citizens of all ages are enabled to think, to be aware of their dignity and social responsibility and be willing to work for the good of the whole society.

But first, the church in Hong Kong must get itself transformed. The church is for the world. The church must reset its missionary priorities as Hong Kong moves closer to 1997. The church spends far too little on seminary education (about 1% of the total budget to maintain a score of denominational offices and 800 odd congregations and 100 Roman Catholic parishes). Its Christian education is obsolete and Christian worship deadening.

To conclude, in facing the future, the church in Hong Kong may be far better off if it gets rid of its huge business empire (there are signs of disintegrating because of poor management) and concentrate in providing Christian nurture to their members on the one hand and on another, to try to find a little space to contribute to the overall sociopolitical as well as economic and cultural development of Hong Kong.

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